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ATONEMENT IN CHRIST

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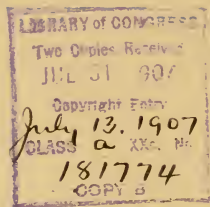
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THE ATONEMENT IN CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE preliminary statement of a few facts and principles will be helpful in the more formal discussion of atonement.

1. *Scope of the Subject.*—The atonement may be treated in a broader or in a more restricted sense. In the former sense it may include the whole of soteriology, while in the latter it may be treated specially as the ground of justification, or the forgiveness of sin. In each case the comprehension is logically determined by cardinal doctrines of the system in connection with which the subject is treated.

2. *Broader Scope in Calvinism.*—The present discussion, so far as concerned with the doctrinal relations of the atonement, will not be limited to its connection with the Calvinian and Arminian systems. Yet their prominence in the circle of evangelical doctrines, and in the maintenance of a real and necessary atonement in the mediation of Christ, will justify a chief attention to its scientific relations to them. It will, therefore, be proper thus early to indicate the comprehension of the question in these two systems respectively.

Both Calvinism and Arminianism assert the forgive-

ness of sin in justification. But the former cannot consistently maintain the same sense of forgiveness as the latter ; while it includes much more in justification, and accounts for the same on its own distinctive grounds. In Calvinism the active obedience of Christ supplements his passive obedience in the atonement. His penal suffering is a substitute for the merited punishment of the elect, and in full satisfaction of the penalty of justice against them. Such a substitution must discharge the subjects of its grace from all personal amenability to penal retribution.¹ But the divine law also requires personal righteousness ; and to supply this lack in the elect there is accounted to them the personal righteousness of Christ. Thus, according to this doctrine, two vicarious elements—a substituted punishment and a substituted obedience—unite in the sufficiency of the atonement. The two must combine in such a justification of the elect as the divine law imperatively requires. This is the radical idea in the Reformed soteriology. The nature of the atonement is determined accordingly. It follows that in this scheme the history of the doctrine of atonement is largely a history of the doctrine of justification.² But the justification is not the same as that in Arminianism.

In such a scheme both the active and passive obedience of Christ must go to the account of the elect. Any principle which would admit the latter would equally admit the former. And both are for the elect

¹ Chap. vii, VI, 2.

² Ritschl: "History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation."

by compact between the Father and the Son. Any failure in such result would, therefore, be a failure in the very covenant of redemption. A sovereign bestowment of the saving benefits of such an atonement is an integral part of the redemptive economy.¹ In such facts we have the logical reason for so full an inclusion of soteriology in the question of atonement.

3. *Narrower Scope in Arminianism.*—According to the Arminian soteriology we are justified in the forgiveness of sin. This is not the same as a discharge after merited punishment. And the personal holiness of Christ, while necessary to his redemptive mediation, is not accounted to us as an element in our justification. The atonement in his blood is the true and necessary ground of forgiveness. Yet it is not such a ground that the forgiveness must accrue to the redeemed. Justification or forgiveness is conditioned on a true faith in Christ. The required faith may be exercised, but is subject to no necessitating power of grace. Hence the atonement is only a provisory ground, not an intrinsically causal ground, of forgiveness and salvation.

This is the view of atonement in the Arminian system. Such it must be in scientific consistency, however it may be historically. No system receives completeness at once; but such is the historic as well as the consistent doctrine in Wesleyan Arminianism. This position is verified, not so much by Methodistic literature directly on the *doctrine* of atonement—of which there is very little—as by that on intimately related cardinal truths; most of all by the common faith of

¹ "Westminster Confession," chap. viii, 1.

Methodism and the uniform utterance of its many pulpits. In such faith and utterance there has ever been given forth, and without hesitation, the universality of the atonement in a real sufficiency for all, notwithstanding many perish; the true conditionality of salvation; the common gracious ability to believe in Christ and be saved. The atonement in accord with such facts is provisory, not absolute or directly saving. Hence the logical reason for its treatment in the Arminian system in its more special and restricted relation to the forgiveness of sin. While it is the ground of all the benefits of grace in a completed salvation, such benefits, as really conditional, properly form a distinct part of the soteriology of the Gospel.

4. *No Fact of Soteriology Neglected.*—Nor does such restriction imply a neglect or slight estimation of any fact in the economy of redemption. The benefits of redemptive grace in an actual salvation, while traced to the atonement as their only source, are treated separately from the nature of the atonement itself. As conditional to us, and conditional in the truest sense of *synergism* as against *monergism*, any proper method must assign them a distinct place of treatment.

5. *Treatment under Offices of Christ.*—The atonement has often been treated under the three offices of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. This is legitimate in a theory which makes it comprehensive of soteriology. It is, therefore, proper for Calvinism, and has been common with this system. It would answer for the Socinian atonement, and for any particular phase of it, provided there were held in connection with it such

a Christology as would render a proper account of these offices. For on this theory the functions of the prophetic and kingly offices of Christ enter into his redemptive mediation as really as the functions of his priestly office. But such a method is not in accordance with the Arminian scheme. In this, as in any true view, the prophetic office of Christ fulfilled no function in his specific atoning work. And his kingly office, so far as related to the atonement, has its proper function in the dispensation of its benefits. The atonement in itself appertains to the priestly office of Christ, and could be treated under it alone with higher propriety of method than under the three offices.

6. *Distinction of Fact and Doctrine.*—We should distinguish between the fact and the doctrine of atonement. Are the vicarious sufferings of Christ the ground of forgiveness and salvation? In what sense are they such a ground? These are distinct questions, and open to distinct answers. The first concerns the fact of an atonement in the sacrifice of Christ; the second concerns its nature or doctrine. Nor does an affirmative answer to the first question determine the answer to the second. Were this so, all who hold the fact of an atonement would agree in the doctrine. But such is not the case. Different schemes of theology—and of an evangelical theology—while in the fullest accord on the fact, are widely divergent respecting the theory.

7. *Question of Fact the more Vital.*—Both questions are important, but that concerning the fact is the more vital. This gives us the reality of an atonement

in Christ. That atonement we may accept in faith, and receive the benefit of its grace before we attain to its philosophy. So accepted, it has the most salutary influence upon the religious life. To this both the experience of individual Christians and the history of the Church bear witness. And the fact of an atonement has a deeper religious significance than any theory of its nature.

Yet the question of theory is far from being an indifferent or merely speculative one. The atonement is most fundamental in Christianity. Hence the theory of it must hold a commanding position in any system of Christian doctrine, and largely draw into itself the interest of the system. This is apparent upon a reference to the three great systems, which may be designated as the Arminian, the Calvinian, and the Socinian. As are other cardinal doctrines of each, so is its doctrine of atonement, or, conversely, as its doctrine of atonement, so are its other doctrines.

In all profounder study the mind, by an inevitable tendency, searches for a philosophy of things. There is the same tendency in the deeper study of Christian truth. Thus, beyond the fact of an atonement, we search for a doctrine. We seek to understand its nature; what are its elements of atoning value; how it is the ground of divine forgiveness. We attempt its *rationale*. It must have a philosophy; and one clear to the divine mind, whatever obscurity it may have to the human. Its clear apprehension would be helpful to faith in many minds.¹

¹ Marshall Randles: "Substitution: Atonement," pp. 2, 3.

8. *Specially a Question of Revelation.*—The question respecting the fact of an atonement must be taken to the Scriptures for the only correct and authoritative answer. Nor is the answer so found in any ambiguity or doubt. It is decisively given in the many sacred facts and utterances which set forth the mediation of Christ, especially in his sufferings and death, as the true and only ground of forgiveness and salvation. These facts and utterances are so numerous and concurrent, so direct and explicit, as to settle the question respecting the reality of an atonement in the most affirmative sense.

9. *The Doctrine must Interpret Scripture.*—A doctrine of atonement, having its only sufficient ground in the Scriptures, must, in a strict and full sense, be scriptural. There can be no true scheme which does not fairly interpret the Scriptures. To construct a theory, and then to press all interpretation into conformity with it, would be as grievous a violation of scientific method in theology as in the case of a student of nature who should first formulate a law and then bend all relative facts into agreement with it. As the scientist should first study the facts, and then generalize them into such a law as they may warrant, and which, in turn, will properly interpret them; so a true doctrine of atonement must be a construction in the light of Scripture facts and utterances, and such as will fairly interpret them.

10. *Its Scientific Relation to Theology.*—That a doctrine of atonement must fairly interpret the facts and terms of Scripture in which it is expressed, we hold to

be an imperative law. There is also a law of the highest authority in logical method. It is the law of scientific accordance in intimately related doctrinal truths. It has its application to all scientific systems, and to the science of theology equally as to any other. In any and every system truth must accord with truth. In systematic theology doctrine must accord with doctrine. Under this law a doctrine of atonement must be in scientific accord with cardinal doctrines vitally related to it.

This law, while imperative, neither leads us away from the authority of Scripture nor lands us in a sphere of mere speculation. All Christian doctrine, to be true, must be scriptural. Doctrines in a system, to be true, must be both accordant and scriptural. If discordant or contradictory, some one or more must be both unscriptural and false. Hence this law of a scientific accordance in vitally related truths is consistent with the profoundest deference to the authority of revelation in all questions of Christian doctrine.

This law may render valuable service in the construction and interpretation of Christian doctrine. As we may interpret Scripture by Scripture, so may we interpret doctrine by doctrine. Only, the interpreting doctrine must itself be certainly scriptural. As such, no Christian doctrine can be out of accord with it. In any distinction of standard or determining doctrines, preference should be given to the more fundamental; especially to such as are most certainly scriptural. Accepting such a law in the interpretation of atonement, or in the determination of its nature, we are still

rendering the fullest obedience to the authority of the Scriptures in Christian doctrine.

In the line of these facts and principles this law may be of special service in testing different theories of atonement as they belong to different systems of theology. We shall the better understand the legitimacy and service of this application if we hold in clear view the two leading facts previously noted, that in any system of Christian theology the several doctrines, as constituting a system, must be in scientific agreement, and, as Christian, must be scriptural. Hence, as leading doctrines of the system are true or false, so is the doctrine of atonement which is in accord with them. For illustration we may refer to the three leading systems previously named.

If other peculiar and leading doctrines of the Socinian theology be true and scriptural, so is its atonement of Moral Influence. If its Christology and anthropology be true and scriptural, this atonement is in full harmony with the system ; and, further, is the only one which it needs or will admit. Clearly, it cannot admit either the Satisfaction or the Governmental theory. Both are out of harmony with its more fundamental and determining doctrines, and hence are excluded by the law of a necessary accordance of such truths when brought into scientific relation. The Socinian scheme, by the nature of its anthropology and Christology, denies the need of such an atonement, and has no Christ equal to the making of one. But if on the leading doctrines of Christianity the truth is with the Calvinian or the Arminian system, then the Socinian atonement is false. It

is so out of harmony with such doctrines that it cannot be true while they are true.

If other cardinal doctrines of Calvinism are true, its doctrine of atonement is true. It is an integral part of the system, and in full harmony with every other part of it. The doctrines of divine sovereignty and decrees, of unconditional election to salvation, of the effectual calling and final perseverance of the elect, and that their salvation is monergistically wrought as it is sovereignly decreed, require an atonement which in its very nature is and must be effectual in the salvation of all for whom it is made. Such an atonement the system has in the absolute substitution of Christ, both in precept and penalty, in behalf of the elect. He fulfills the righteousness which the law requires of them, and suffers the punishment which their sins deserve. By the nature of the substitution both must go to their account. Such a theory of atonement is in scientific accord with the whole system. And the truth of the system would carry with it the truth of the theory. It can admit no other theory. Nor can such an atonement be true if the system be false.

If the cardinal doctrines of the Arminian system, such as differentiate it from Calvinism, be true, then the atonement of Satisfaction, in the Calvinistic sense of it, cannot be true. If, as before noted, the atonement is really for all, and in the same sense sufficient for all, then it must be only provisory, and its saving benefits really conditional. And no other truths are more deeply wrought into Arminianism, whether original or Wesleyan; none have a more uniform, constant, unqualified

Methodistic utterance. They are such facts of atonement, or facts in such logical relation to it, that they require a doctrine in scientific agreement with them.

Such a doctrine is the special aim of this discussion—not without regard to consistency in the system, but specially because these facts are scriptural and the doctrine agreeing with them scriptural and true. Certain it is, that the law of a necessary accordance in cardinal truths wrought into the same system, must bar the admission of the Calvinistic doctrine of Satisfaction into the Arminian system. For such an atonement is necessarily saving, and must, therefore, bring with it unconditional election, effectual calling, final perseverance, monergism. A doctrine inseparably linked with such tenets never can be wrought into scientific accordance with the cardinal and distinctive doctrines of Arminianism. Nor can it be true while they are true.

11. *Definition of Atonement.*—A true doctrine of atonement can be fully given only in its formal exposition. Yet we give thus early a definition, with a few explanatory notes, that, so far as practicable by such means, we may place in view the doctrine which this discussion shall maintain.

The vicarious sufferings of Christ are an atonement for sin as a conditional substitute for penalty, fulfilling, on the forgiveness of sin, the obligation of justice and the office of penalty in moral government.

The sufferings of Christ are *vicarious*, not as incidental to a philanthropic or reformatory mission, but as endured for sinners under divine judicial condemnation, that they might be forgiven and saved.

They are a *substitute* for penalty, not as the punishment of sin judicially inflicted upon Christ, but in such a rectoral relation to justice and law as renders them a true and sufficient ground of forgiveness.

They are a *conditional* substitute for penalty, as a provisory measure of government, rendering forgiveness, on proper conditions, consistent with the obligations of justice in moral administration. Subjects of the atonement are none the less guilty simply on that account, as they would be under an atonement by penal substitution, wherein Christ suffered the judicial punishment of sin in satisfaction of an absolute retributive justice. Under a provisory substitution, the gracious franchise is in a privilege of forgiveness, to be realized only on its proper conditions.

Thus the substitution of Christ in suffering *fulfills the obligation of justice and the office of penalty* in their relation to the *ends* of moral government. Justice has an imperative obligation respecting these ends; and penalty, as the means of justice, a necessary office for their attainment. But penalty, as an element of law, is the means of good government, not only in its imminece or execution, but also through the moral ideas which it expresses.¹ Hence its infliction in punishment is not an absolute necessity to the ends of its office. The rectoral service of its execution may be substituted, and in every instance of forgiveness is substituted, by the sufferings of Christ. The interest of moral government is thereby equally conserved.²

The *ends* of justice thus concerned involve the pro-

¹ Ch. viii, III, 3.

² Ibid., 4.

foundest interest. They include the honor and authority of God as ruler in the moral realm ; the most sacred rights and the highest welfare of moral beings ; the utmost attainable restraint of sin and promotion of righteousness. Divine justice must regard these ends. In their neglect it would cease to be justice. It must protect them through the means of penalty, except on the ground of such provisory substitute as will render forgiveness consistent with that protection. Such a substitute is found only in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. As fully answering for these ends, his sufferings are an atonement for sin, fulfilling, on forgiveness, the obligation of justice and the office of penalty in moral government.

CHAPTER II.

REALITY OF ATONEMENT.

IN this chapter we treat the atonement simply as a fact, not as a doctrine. The sense in which the vicarious sacrifice of Christ constitutes the objective ground of divine forgiveness is for future discussion.

I.

WITNESSING FACTS.

There are certain facts that all should receive as scriptural, however diversely they may be interpreted. We claim for them a decisive testimony to the reality of an atonement for sin in the mediation of Christ.

1. *A Message of Salvation.*—The Gospel is pre-eminently such a message to a sinful and lost world. Its very style as the Gospel—τὸ εὐαγγέλιον—sets it forth as good tidings. It is “the glorious Gospel of the blessed God ;”¹ “the Gospel of the grace of God ;”² “the Gospel of salvation.”³ A free overture of grace in forgiveness and salvation crowns the Gospel of Christ.

2. *The Salvation in Christ.*—While the great fact of Revelation is the mission of Christ, the great purpose of this mission is the salvation of sinners. The Scriptures ever witness to this purpose, and specially reveal Christ as the Saviour. The Angel of the Annunciation gave charge respecting the coming Messiah : “And thou

¹ 1 Tim. 1 : 11.² Acts 20 : 24.³ Eph. 1 : 13.

shalt call his name Jesus ; for he shall save his people from their sins.”¹ The announcement of the blessed Advent to the shepherds was in a like strain : “And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”² Additional texts could only emphasize these explicit utterances of the salvation in Christ. “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved.”³ “This is, indeed, the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”⁴ “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.”⁵ These texts, though but a small fraction of a great number, are sufficient for the verification of the fact that the salvation so freely offered in the Gospel is a salvation in Christ.

3. *Salvation in his Suffering.*—This truth is declared by the very many texts which set forth the mission of Christ as the Saviour of sinners. They are so numerous that their full citation would fill many pages. We may give a few in part. “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed.”⁶ This whole chapter is full of the same truth, and clearly anticipates the higher revelation of the New Testament. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.”⁷

¹ Matt. 1: 21.² Luke 2: 10, 11.³ John 3: 17.⁴ John 4: 42.⁵ 1 John 4: 14.⁶ Isa. 53: 5.⁷ Rom. 3: 25.

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”¹ “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”² “And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”³ “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”⁴ These words, so explicitly attributing our salvation to the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, might well be heard as from the very border-land between the earthly and heavenly estates. Then like words, and equally explicit, come from beyond the border, attributing the salvation of the saints in heaven to the same atoning blood. “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.”⁵ These texts sufficiently verify this third fact as a fact of Scripture, that the salvation so freely offered in the Gospel of Christ is a salvation provided in his suffering and death.

4. *His redeeming Death Necessary.*—The vicarious sacrifice of Christ was not a primary or absolute necessity, but only as the sufficient ground of forgiveness. And not only is salvation directly ascribed to his blood, but his redeeming death is declared to be necessary to

¹ Rom. 5: 9.² 1 Pet. 3: 18.³ 1 John 1: 7.⁴ Rev. 1: 5, 6.⁵ Rev. 7: 14, 15.

this salvation. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."¹ Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, not for the fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures, but in order to the salvation which, long before his advent, they had foretold as the provision of his vicarious sacrifice. Only on the ground of his suffering and death could there be either the preaching of repentance, or the grace of repentance, or the remission of sins. This was the imperative behoof. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."² The emphasis of this text is in the fact that these things are affirmed of the crucified Christ. "For if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."³ In the context St. Paul is asserting his own realization of a spiritual life through faith in Christ, who loved him, and gave himself for him. This life in salvation he declares to be impossible by the law, and possible only through the sacrificial death of Christ. Were it otherwise, Christ has died in vain. The necessity for his redeeming death in order to forgiveness and salvation could not be given more explicitly, nor with deeper emphasis. "For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."⁴ Here is the same truth of necessity. Life is by the redeeming Christ, and has no other possible source.

¹ Luke 24: 46, 47. ² Acts 4: 12. ³ Gal. 2: 21. ⁴ Gal. 3: 21

5. *Only Explanation of His Suffering.*—The sufferings of Christ were for no sin of his own. Nor were they officially necessary, except as an atonement for sin. He had power to avert them, and endured them only through love to a lost world, and in filial obedience to his Father's will.¹ They were not chosen for their own sake on the part of either, but only in the interest of human salvation. They were a profound sacrifice on the part of both. And while the Son went willingly down into their awful depths, his very nature shrank from them. Three times the prayer of his soul was poured out to his loving Father, "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."² There must have been some profound necessity for his drinking it. Clearly that necessity lay in this—that only thereby could salvation be brought into the world. And these profound sufferings of the redeeming Son witness to the reality of an atonement for sin.

6. *Necessity of Faith to Salvation.*—The facts already given and verified by the Scriptures are decisive of an atonement for sin in the sufferings and death of Christ. They go beyond its reality and conclude its necessity. It is also a significant fact, and one bearing on the same point, that faith in Christ, and as the redeeming Christ, is the true and necessary condition of forgiveness and salvation. The application is to those who have the Gospel. This condition cannot be required of those who have not the Gospel. We doubt not the possibility of their salvation: but their only salvation is in Christ; and for them God has his own method in his

¹ John 10: 18

² Matt. 26: 39, 42, 44.

own wisdom and grace. Their case, however, has nothing to do with the requirement of faith on the part of all who have the Gospel. And the fact of this requirement will answer for the proof of an atonement in the sacrifice of Christ.

Generally, faith in Christ, with the associated idea of his redeeming death, is set forth as the true and necessary condition of salvation. Proof-texts are numerous and familiar. We may instance the great commission: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."¹ As Christ laid this solemn charge upon his ministers to preach the Gospel in all the world, and which should be so especially the preaching of himself crucified, it was very proper and profoundly important that he should distinctly set forth the condition of the great salvation so proclaimed. This he did in the most explicit terms. Faith in Christ is the condition so clearly given. This is the imperative requirement. And the Lord emphasizes the fact by declaring the different consequences of believing and not believing. Were this the only proof-text, it would conclude the fact of faith in Christ as the true and necessary condition of forgiveness and salvation.

We may add another in this general view. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal

¹ Mark 16: 15, 16.

life."¹ As the Israelites, bitten by the fiery serpents and ready to perish, were recovered only in looking upon the brazen serpent which Moses lifted up in the midst of the camp;² so is our salvation conditioned on our faith in Christ lifted up upon the cross as a sacrifice for sin.

Yet more directly is this fact given. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."³ Here the forgiveness of sin is through the propitiatory blood of Christ as its ground, and on faith therein as its condition. Such is the economy of redemption, whereby the divine righteousness is vindicated in the justification of sinners.

Faith could not be so required were not the blood of Christ a true and necessary atonement for sin. Were repentance a sufficient ground of forgiveness, it would still be necessary to believe certain religious truths for the sake of their practical force. Only thus could there be a true repentance. But such is not the faith on which we are justified. There is a clear distinction of offices in the two cases. The faith necessary to repentance is operative through the practical force of the religious truths which it apprehends; but the justifying faith apprehends the blood of Christ as a propitiation for sin, trusts directly therein, and receives forgiveness as the immediate gift of grace. No other view will in-

¹ John 3: 14, 15.

² Num. 21: 7-9.

³ Rom. 3: 25, 26.

interpret the Scriptures, which most explicitly give us the truth of justification by faith in Christ.¹ The justification is in the forgiveness of sin, and must be, as it is the justification of sinners. And the direct and necessary connection of justification with faith in the redemption of Christ, together with the immediateness of the forgiveness itself, concludes this distinct office of justifying faith. Hence, to confound such a faith with another faith in Christ as salutary simply through the practical force of spiritual truths and motives so apprehended, is to jumble things egregiously.

There is such a practical faith in Christ, and of the highest moral potency. It may precede or follow the justifying faith. It apprehends the great practical lessons embodied in the Gospel of Christ. Their apprehension in faith is the necessary condition of their practical force. The soul thus opens to their moral motives, and realizes their practical influence. This is the philosophy of a chief element of the practical power of faith. It gives the law of moral potency in all practical appeals in view of the love of God and the sacrifice of Christ in the redemptive mediation.

Such is the only office of faith in the scheme of Moral influence. We fully accept the fact of a great practical lesson in the mediation of Christ; and our own doctrine combines the weightiest elements of its potency. But we object to the accounting this moral lesson, however valuable, an element of the atonement proper—most of all, the very atonement itself. This is the error of the theory of Moral influence. It is all the

¹Rom. 3: 19-22; 4: 5; Gal. 2: 16; 3: 22-24.

same when the advocate is in the fellowship of ecclesiastic orthodoxy. Dr. Bushnell, in his first monograph on atonement, is an instance.¹ We have another in Frederick Denison Maurice: "Every deed of love to those tormented with plagues and sicknesses, every parable to the multitude, every discourse with his disciples, was *letting his light shine before men, that they, seeing his good works, might glorify his Father in heaven*. That was the work which he came to do, and which he finished when he gave up the ghost." Thus the sacrifice of Christ fulfills its atoning office through the practical force of a moral lesson. By the principles and references of the author, given with his own italicising, the sermon on the mount, the miracles, teachings, charities of Christ, go into his atonement for sin, in the same manner as his sacrifice upon the cross. It follows, that Christians, through the light of their good works, are atoning for sin by the same means, and the only means, whereby Christ himself atoned for it. Surely these facts are enough for the refutation of the scheme.

But our special objection to this view here is, that it denies a distinct office of faith in the propitiatory work of Christ as the condition of forgiveness in justification. It consistently and necessarily does this. But there is such an office of faith, and one clearly distinguished from its office as a practical force in the religious life. And the distinct requirement of faith in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, in order to forgiveness, is con-

¹ "The Vicarious Sacrifice."

² "The Doctrine of Sacrifice," p. 223.

clusive of a true and necessary atonement for sin in his sufferings and death.

7. *Christ a Unique Saviour.*—Christ is a person in history; but his history is unique, and his character and work unique. Often designated the Son of man, he yet cannot be classed with men. No law of science or philosophy would warrant or even permit such a classification. In the fashion of a man, he is yet above men. The facts of his life constitute a new history, distinct and different from all others. They reveal a personal consciousness alone in its kind. A manifest fact of this consciousness is the profound sense of a divine vocation, original and singular in the moral history of the world, and which he only can fulfill. The moral impression of his life upon the souls of men is peculiar to itself, and fitly responsive to the originality of his own character and work. Amid men and angels, he stands apart in his own personality and mission.

His religion is unique. It is such because he, as a religious founder, is original and singular. Here, also, he cannot be classed with others in any exact scientific sense. Every religion is, more or less, what its founder is. His thoughts and feelings are wrought into it. It takes its molding from the cast of his mind. Its aims and forces are the outgoing of his own subjective life. Most eminently has Christ wrought his own soul and life into his own religion. In the highest sense, its aims and forces are the outgoing of his own mind: so much so, that to come into the same mind with him is the highest realization of the Christian life. What he is his religion is. But his distinctive peculiarity, as the

founder of a religion, is not so much in the higher measure of his own life wrought into it, as in the quality of that life. Hence his religion differs so much from all others, because he differs so much from all other religious founders.

His religion is unique as one of salvation. And it is not only the fact of a salvation, but especially the distinctive character of it, that constitutes the peculiarity. It is a salvation in forgiveness of sin, and in moral regeneration. So it is realized in the gracious experience of many souls. And this salvation comes not as the fruit of culture, nor in reward of personal merit, nor as the purchase of penance or treasure. A religion grounded in such profound truths respecting God and man, and especially respecting man's moral state and spiritual destiny and needs, never could offer such a salvation on such conditions. The means have no sufficiency for the end. This salvation is provided for and possible only in the grace and spiritual agencies of a redemptive economy. Here sin is taken away, and the soul renewed. There is a new life in Christ. In this life is salvation—such a salvation as no other religion provides.

Most of all, is Christ a unique Saviour in that he saves us by the sacrifice of himself. The salvation is not in his divinity, nor in his humanity, nor in his unique personality as the God-man, nor in the lessons of religion which he taught, nor in the perfect life which he lived and gave to the world as an example, nor in the love wherewith he loved us, nor in all the moral force of life, and lesson, and love combined, but

in his cross—in the blood of his cross as an atonement for sin. The voice of revelation is one voice, ever distinct, unvarying, and emphatic, in the utterance of this truth. This utterance comes forth of all the facts and words which reveal the distinctively saving work of Christ. They need no citation here. A few have already been given. Others will appear in their proper place. For the present, the position need only be stated and emphasized: Christ is a Saviour through an atonement in his blood as the ground of forgiveness. He is such a Saviour singularly, uniquely. The fact is too clear and certain for denial. No one familiar with the Scriptures, and frank in his spiritual mood, can question it.

This is a cardinal fact, and one not to be overlooked in the interpretation of the redeeming work of Christ. No other has ever claimed to put his own life and blood into the saving sufficiency and efficiency of his religion. No other is, or can be, such a Saviour as Christ. If a Saviour only through a moral influence, good men are saviours as truly as he, and in the same mode, differing only in the measure of their influence. Can such a theory interpret the Scriptures, or find a response in the highest, best form of the Christian consciousness? Who is there in all the Christian ages whom we can regard as a saviour in the same sense as Christ, and differing only in the measure of his saving influence? As revealed in the Scriptures, and apprehended in the living faith of the Church, and realized in the truest Christian experience, Christ is the only Saviour. And he is a Saviour only through an atone-

ment in his blood. This is his highest distinction as a Saviour, and one that places him apart from all others. Any scheme of Christianity contrary to this view is false to the Scriptures, false to the soteriology of the Gospel, false to the living religious faith and consciousness of the Christian centuries. And unless we can surrender all essentially distinctive character in the saving work of Christ, and so do violence to all decisive facts in the case, we must maintain a true atonement in his death as the only and necessary ground of forgiveness and salvation.

II.

WITNESSING TERMS.

Advocates of an objective atonement in Christ, while differing on the doctrine, are quite agreed on the Scripture proofs of the fact. Their interpretations are much the same, except where they go beyond the reality of an atonement and press their respective doctrinal views into the exposition. It is in the order of a better method to keep, as far as practicable, to one question at a time. This we shall endeavor to do in treating the leading terms for the fact of atonement. The doctrine which they contain will still be held for future discussion.

A full treatment of these terms for the purpose in hand would require a volume. The discussion has often been elaborately gone over, and very conclusively for the fact of an atonement. There is, therefore, the less occasion to repeat it. Any one interested in the question will readily find its full and

able treatment in the standard works on systematic theology, and in treatises exclusively on the atonement.

This discussion has no prescriptive method. Some deal with individual texts; some follow the order of the sacred writers, treating successively what each one gives on the question; others proceed in an order of the more specific terms of atonement, grouping under these severally the facts and texts which properly belong to them. We shall follow this method as the best, and as specially suited to the brief discussion which we propose.

1. *Atonement*.—This term is of frequent use in the Old Testament, but occurs only once in the New. The original, כִּפֹּר, signifies to cover; then to cover sin, to forgive sin, to discharge from punishment: in its noun form, an expiation, a propitiation, a redemption.¹

In its primary meaning the term has no proper sense of atonement.² It has such a sense in its appropriated use. Its meaning, as in the history of many other terms, is broadened in its use. A rigid adherence in such a case to the primary sense is false to the deeper ideas conveyed.

Atonement, as expressed by this term, was often for the removal of ceremonial impurities, or in order to a proper qualification for sacred services. It has this sense in application to both things and persons.³ We

¹ Gesenius, "Hebrew and English Lexicon;" Magee, "Atonement and Sacrifice," dissertation xxxvi; Dr. John Pye Smith, "Sacrifice and Priesthood," pp. 136, 301-304; Rev. Alford Cave, "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," pp. 482-486.

² Gen. 6: 14.

³ Lev. 16: 11, 16, 18, 33.

have not yet, however, the full sense, but a foreshadowing of its deeper meaning.

In the more strictly moral and legal relations of the term, we may admit a lower and a higher sense, and without any concession to those who, on the ground of the former, would exclude the latter. In many instances atonement was made for what are designated as sins of ignorance.¹ It may not be rightfully assumed that these sins were without amenability in justice and law. The contrary is apparent. "The ignorance intended cannot have been of a nature absolute and invincible, but such as the clear promulgation of their law, and their strict obligation to study it day and night, rendered them accountable for, and which was consequently in a certain degree culpable."² Nor does it follow that there is no true sense of atonement because such sins have not the deepest criminality.

But were such instances without culpability, and therefore without evidence of an atonement, the fact would not affect the instances of atonement for sins of the deepest responsibility. There are such instances.³ And to put the lower sense upon examples of the higher; most of all, to deny the higher because there is a lower, is without law in Scripture exegesis.

In the higher moral and legal relations of atonement there are the facts of sin and judicial condemnation. The offender is answerable in penalty. Then there is a vicarious sacrifice, and the forgiveness of

¹ Lev. 4: 13-26; 5: 17-19; Num. 15: 24-28.

² Magee, "Atonement and Sacrifice," dissertation xxxvii.

³ Lev. 6: 2-7.

the sinner. There is an atonement for sin. The fact is clear in the Scripture texts given by reference. Others, equally conclusive, will be given in another connection.

There are in the use of the term instances of atonement without any sacrifice. Moses, by an intercessory prayer, made an atonement for Israel after the sin of idolatry in worshiping the golden calf.¹ Aaron, with his censer, atoned for the congregation after the rebellion of Korah.² Phinehas, by his religious zeal, made an atonement for the people, and turned away from them the divine wrath.³

In view of such facts, it is urged that there is no direct and necessary connection between sacrifices of atonement and the divine forgiveness, and hence, that there is no proof in the sacrificial system of an atonement for sin in the sacrifice of Christ. This is inconsequent. The sacrifices of the law were an atonement only typically, not intrinsically.⁴ While, therefore, certain kinds might have special fitness for this service, yet mere typical fitness has nothing essential. Hence these sacrifices of atonement might be varied or even omitted, while the atonement in the sacrifice of Christ, as intrinsically such, is both real and necessary. The proof of atonement from the sacrificial system will be treated in connection with the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ.

We get the proof of an atonement in Christ, not so much from the direct application of the original term

¹ Exod. 32: 30-32.

² Num. 16: 46-48.

³ Num. 25: 11-13.

⁴ Heb. 10: 1-11.

to him as from certain significant types fulfilled in him, and especially from the application of equivalent terms in the Greek of the New Testament to his redemptive mediation.

We may give one instance in which the original term is applied to the atoning sacrifice of Christ.¹ The passage referred to is clearly Messianic. It determines by historic connections the time of Christ's advent. Then it gives certain ends to be accomplished: "to make an end of sins"—to terminate the typical sacrifices of the law by the one sufficient sacrifice of himself; "and to make reconciliation—וִּלְכַפֵּר—for iniquity." The passage clearly shows that Christ makes an atonement for sin by the sacrifice of himself. And this sense is emphasized in the further fact, that "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself," especially as viewed in the light of intimately related facts and utterances of the Gospel.

As previously noted, the term atonement occurs but once in the English version of the New Testament, and then as the rendering of *καταλλαγή*, usually rendered reconciliation.² The text, therefore, properly belongs to this term.

2. *Reconciliation*.—Reconciliation, and to reconcile—*καταλλαγή*, *καταλλάσσειν*—are terms frequently applied to the redemptive work of Christ, and with the clear sense of a real atonement.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."³ This is the

¹ Dan. 9: 24–26.

² Rom. 5: 11.

³ Rom. 5: 10.

reconciliation of enemies, and, therefore, of persons under God's displeasure and judicial condemnation. The reconciliation is by the death of his Son. The assurance of salvation lies in the fact of such a reconciliation of enemies. The divine acceptance in favor comes after this reconciliation as its provisory ground. The death of Christ renders forgiveness consistent with the requirements of justice in moral administration. Such a reconciliation is the reality of atonement. With such a fact St. Paul might well add: "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received—*τὴν καταλλαγὴν*—the reconciliation."¹ Here is the joy of an actual reconciliation through the death of Christ.

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation," etc.² The facts of this text give the sense of a real atonement. The reconciliation is in Christ. It includes a non-imputation of sin; that is, we are no longer held in absolute condemnation, but have the gracious privilege of the divine forgiveness and friendship. Hence there is committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, with its gracious overtures and entreaties. And the manner in which God reconciles us to himself in Christ is deeply emphasized: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."³ Any fair exposition of this text must find in it the fact of an atonement.³

¹ Rom. 5: 11.² 2 Cor. 5: 18-21.³ See also Eph. 2: 16; Col. 1: 20-22; Heb. 2: 17.

It is urged in objection, that in these texts we are said to be reconciled to God, not God to us. The fact is admitted, while the validity of the objection is denied. It falsely assumes that the only bar to God's friendship with his rebellious subjects is in their hostility to him; and hence illogically concludes that the reconciliation in Christ is an atonement, not as a rectoral ground of the divine forgiveness, but simply as a moral influence leading them to repentance and loyalty. This is contradicted by many principles and facts previously discussed. It is contrary to those texts according to which God, by the reconciliation in Christ, puts himself into a relation of mercy toward us, and then, on the ground of this reconciliation, urges and entreats us in penitence and faith to accept his offered forgiveness and love. Thus upon the ground of a provisory divine reconciliation there will follow an actual reconciliation and a mutual friendship.

Further, this objection falsely assumes that reconciliation is simply the cessation of hostility in the party said to be reconciled. It properly means, and often can only mean, that he is reconciled in the sense of finding the forgiveness and friendship of the party to whom he is reconciled. Of this there are familiar instances in Scripture.¹ As applied to rebellious subjects, the term has its first relation to the ruler. "To be *reconciled*, when spoken of subjects who have been in rebellion against their sovereign, is to be brought into a state in which pardon is offered to them, and they have it in their power to render themselves capable of that par-

¹ 1 Sam. 23: 4; Matt. 5: 23, 24.

don; namely, by laying down their enmity. . . . Wherefore, *the reconciliation* received through Christ is God's placing all mankind, ever since the fall, under the gracious new covenant procured for them through the obedience of Christ; in which the pardon of sin is offered to them, together with eternal life, on their fulfilling its gracious requisitions."¹ This is an accurate statement of the reconciliation in Christ, and gives us the fact of an atonement therein.

3. *Propitiation*.—To be propitious is to be disposed to forgiveness and favor. To propitiate is to render an aggrieved or offended party clement and forgiving. A propitiation is that whereby the favorable change is wrought. Hence the mediation or blood of Christ as a propitiation for our sins, and the ground of forgiveness, is an atonement. It is an atonement because a propitiation for sin in its relation to the clemency and forgiveness of the divine Ruler.

There are two points to be specially noticed: the nature of the divine propitiousness toward sinners; and the relation of the redemptive mediation of Christ to that propitiousness.

God is propitious to sinners in a disposition toward forgiveness. This is in the definition of the term. The same sense is given in Scripture, without any direct reference to a propitiatory sacrifice. The fact will render the clearer the propitiatory office of the blood of Christ. We will cite a few texts in illustration; but for a clearer view of the sense stated, the original terms—appropriate forms of כִּפָּר, סָלַח, ἱλάσκομαι—should

¹ Macknight: "On the Epistles," Rom. 5:10.

be consulted, as the term propitious, or to be propitious, is not given in our translation. "For thy name's sake, O Lord, *pardon* mine iniquity; for it is great."¹ "But he, being full of compassion, *forgave* their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath."² "O Lord, hear; O Lord, *forgive*."³ "God *be merciful* to me a sinner."⁴ "For I will *be merciful* to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."⁵

These texts, selected from many similar ones, suffice for the position that God is propitious in a disposition toward forgiveness, and in the fact of forgiveness as the exercise of such clemency. Here are sins, and the divine displeasure against them. Here are sinners with a deep sense of sin, and of the divine condemnation. Here are their earnest prayers to God, that he would be propitious and forgive. And he forgives them, turns away his wrath and accepts them in favor, as he is propitious to them.

These facts determine the meaning of a propitiation. It is that which renders an aggrieved or offended party clement and forgiving; that which is the reason or ground of forgiveness. Such a propitiation is an atonement.

Christ is a propitiation for sin. He is such in his sacrificial death, and in relation to the divine clemency and forgiveness. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his

¹ Psalms 25: 11.

² Psalms 78: 33.

³ Daniel 9: 19.

⁴ Luke 18: 13.

⁵ Hebrews 8: 12.

righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.”¹ Here are all the facts of a true propitiation: the pre-supposed sins as an offense against God, and his displeasure against them; the blood of Christ as a propitiation for sins; the divine clemency and forgiveness through this propitiation. The blood of Christ fulfills its propitiatory office with God. There is, therefore, an atonement in his blood. Other Scripture texts give the same truth. “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”² Such a propitiation for sin is the reality of an atonement in Christ.

4. *Redemption*.—Under this term might be classed many texts which, with the utmost certainty, give us the fact of an atonement.

Redemption has a clear and well defined sense. To redeem is to purchase back, to ransom, to liberate from slavery, captivity, or death, by the payment of a price. This gives the sense of redemption or to redeem—*λυτρόω*—in both its classic and Scripture use.³

Under the Mosaic law, alienated lands might be recovered by the payment of a ransom or price. This would be a redemption. Such alienated property, if not previously ransomed, reverted without price at the jubilee; but this reversion was not a redemption, because without any ransom-price.⁴ A poor Israelite

¹ Rom. 3: 25.

² 1 John 2: 2; 4: 10.

³ Dr. John Pye Smith: “Sacrifice and Priesthood,” pp. 204–207; Dr. Hill: “Lectures in Divinity,” pp. 474, 475.

⁴ Lev. 25: 23–28.

might redeem himself from slavery by the payment of a sum reckoned according to the time remaining for which he had sold himself. This would be his redemption. But the freedom which came with the jubilee was not a redemption, because it came without any price.¹ These facts confirm the sense of redemption as previously given. Further, in the case of one who has forfeited his life: "If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatever is laid upon him."² This is an instance of redemption. The same meaning lies in the fact, that for the life of a murderer no ransom was permitted.³

Occasional applications of the term simply in the sense of a deliverance, are not contrary to the truer and deeper meaning. There is a deliverance as the result of a redemption. The ransom is paid in order to the deliverance. And it is a proper usage to apply the name of a thing to its effect, or to what constitutes only a part of its meaning. This use is entirely consistent with the deeper sense of redemption, while the deeper sense cannot be reduced to that of a mere deliverance. This is true of the instances previously given, and will be found true of the redemption in Christ.

We shall here select but a few of the many texts which apply the terms of redemption to the saving work of Christ.

"The Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom for many." "Who gave himself a ransom for all."⁴ The

¹ Lev. 25: 47-54.

² Exod. 21: 30.

³ Num. 35: 31.

⁴ Matt. 20: 28; 1 Tim. 2: 6.

original terms—*λύτρον, ἀντίλυτρον*—are the very terms which signify the ransom or price given for the liberation of a captive, the recovery of any thing forfeited, or the satisfaction of penal obligation. So, for our deliverance from sin and death, and for the recovery of our forfeited spiritual life, Christ gives his life—himself—as the ransom. Redemption in its deeper sense could not have a clearer expression. Truly are we “bought with a price;” “Not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”¹ As in other cases silver and gold constituted the ransom, so the blood of Christ is the price of our redemption from sin.

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity;” “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”² Here are facts of redemption which give us a real atonement. We are sinners, with the penal liabilities of sin; and Christ gives his own life as the price of our ransom.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;” “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the

¹ 1 Cor. 6: 20; 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19.

² Titus 2: 14; Heb. 9: 15

adoption of sons.”¹ In the second text we have a different original word—ἐξαγοράζω—but of like meaning. The subjects of the redemption are under the law, and under the curse of the law—the former state implying all that the latter expresses. Whether “the law” be the law of nature or the Mosaic, the facts of redemption are the same. Under both men are sinners, and by neither is there salvation. The redemption is from the penalty of sin—from the curse of the law. The same sense is determined by the fact, that the redemption is to the end, “that we might receive the adoption of sons.” The death of Christ upon the cross is the redemption.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”² Here we have the same facts of redemption. We are sinners and under divine condemnation. The redemption through Christ, and in his blood, is in order to our justification, or the forgiveness of our sins.

Such are the facts of redemption by Jesus Christ. And with the sin and condemnation of men as its subjects, with the forgiveness and salvation which it provides, with the blood of Christ as the ransom whereby the gracious change is wrought, it is unreasonable to deny the fact of an atonement in his redeeming death. “Every one feels the effect of introducing the nouns λύτρον or ἀντίλυτρον, in connection with the verb λύω, when applied to the case of a discharged debtor or re-

¹ Gal. 3: 13; 4: 4, 5.

² Rom. 3: 24; Eph. 1: 7

leased captive, as making it perfectly clear that his redemption is not gratuitous, but that some consideration is given for the securing it. Nor is the significance of these nouns in the least diminished when it is from penal consequences of a judicial nature that a person is released. The *λύτρον*, indeed, in that case, is not a price from which the lawgiver is to receive any personal advantage. It is the satisfaction to public law and justice upon which he consents to remit the sentence. But still, the mention of it, in this case as well as in others, is absolutely inconsistent with a gratuitous remission.”¹ This statement holds true, with all the force of its facts, in application, as intended, to the redemption in Christ. The deeper ideas of redemption were wrought into the minds of the writers of the New Testament by both their Hebraic and Hellenic education. Nor may we think that they used its terms out of their proper meaning in applying them to the saving work of Christ. Such a redemption is the reality of atonement.

Redemption holds a prominent place in the nomenclature of atonement; indeed, is often used for the designative term instead of atonement itself. It may be pressed into the service of an erroneous doctrine. The result is, a commercial atonement. But this is carrying the analogy in the case to an unwarranted extreme. Redemption is modified by the sphere in which it is made. The ransom price of a captive, or slave, goes to the

¹ Dr. George Hill: “Lectures in Divinity,” vol. ii, p. 483. The passage varies from the same one in the American edition, and is given as quoted by Professor Crawford.

personal benefit of the party making the surrender; it is his compensation. The transaction is one of barter. When a penalty of death was commuted for a sum of money, the ransom was penal and of rectoral service, but also of pecuniary value with the government. In the divine government there can be no such element of redemption. The redemption does not thereby lose the sense of an atonement, but should, therefore, be guarded against an erroneous doctrine. The gist of analogy is in the fact of a compensatory ransom. This is consistent with a wide distinction in the nature of the compensation. There is a wide distinction in fact: in the one case a personal, pecuniary compensation; in the other, a compensation in rectoral value. In the one case money redeems a captive, or slave, as a commercial equivalent; in the other, the blood of Christ redeems a soul as the rectoral equivalent of penalty. The ransom price is as vitally related to the result in the latter case as in the former. This gives us the reality of an atonement in the redemption of Christ, and will give us a doctrine without any commercial element.

5. *Substitution.*—Substitution is not formally a Scripture term, but well expresses the sense of numerous texts in their application to the saving work of Christ. Like the term “redemption,” it may be pressed into the service of an erroneous doctrine. This, however, can be done only by a wrong interpretation of the substitution. But we are still only on the fact of an atonement, and, for the proof of this, here require nothing more than the substitution of Christ in suffering as the ground of forgiveness.

The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is clearly Messianic, and as clearly gives the fact of substitutional atonement. We shall attempt no elaborate or critical exposition. This has often been done, and successfully for the sense of a real atonement.¹ We cite the leading utterances: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. . . . For the transgression of my people was he stricken. . . . Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin. . . . And he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."² These words are decisive of a substitutional atonement in the sufferings of Christ.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."³ Surely here is atonement in substitution. Those for whom Christ died are noted as ungodly, sinners, enemies. Hence they are in a state of condemnation. In the death of Christ for them is the ground of their justification, which is

¹ Alexander, Lowth, Delitzsch, severally on Isaiah, and a thorough treatment of the entire chapter by Rev. M. S. Terry, D.D., in the "Methodist Quarterly Review" for January, 1880.

² Isa. 53: 5-12.

³ Rom. 5: 6-8.

impossible by the deeds of the law. These facts give us atonement by substitution. This sense is confirmed by the suppositive case of one dying for another. It is a supposition of the substitution of one life for another, the rescue of one by the vicarious sacrifice of another. So Christ died for us as sinners, and in order to our forgiveness and salvation. It is a substitution in law ; not penal, but rectoral, so that law might fulfill its office in the interest of moral government. This is vicarious atonement.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness : by whose stripes ye were healed.”¹ Here is a clear reference to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and also the same sense of atonement by substitution.

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”² Our sins separate us from God, and bring us under his condemnation. There can be reconciliation and fellowship only through forgiveness. Christ provides for this by suffering for our sins in our stead—the just for the unjust. This is the reality of atonement by substitution in suffering.

III.

PRIESTHOOD AND SACRIFICE.

1. *The Priesthood of Christ.*—His priesthood has its prophetic utterance: “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”³ The fullest unfolding of his priest-

¹ 1 Pet. 2: 24.

² 1 Pet. 3: 18.

³ Psa. 110: 4.

hood, with its sacrificial and intercessory offices, is in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." "Seeing then that we have a great high-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high-priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."¹ These texts will suffice for what is really placed beyond question.

2. *His Sacrificial Office.*—As it was an office of the priesthood, under the law, to offer sacrifices in atonement for sin, so Christ as our high-priest must offer a sacrifice for sin. This is not a mere inference, but the word of Scripture: "For every high-priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer."²

3. *Himself a Sacrifice for Sin.*—Nor are we left in any doubt respecting His sacrifice. He offers up Himself. The fact is so often stated, and in such terms, as to give it the profoundest significance. "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."³ "Who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."⁴ "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,

¹ Heb. 2: 17; 4: 14; 8: 1. ² Heb. 8: 3. ³ Eph. 5: 2. ⁴ Heb. 7: 27.

purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high-priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."¹

No critical exegesis is required to find in these texts the fact of an atonement in the mediation of Christ. It lies upon their face, and enters into their deepest life. He is a sacrifice, self-offered, in atonement for sin; a sacrifice offered to God in such atonement, that we might be forgiven and saved. The sufficiency of this one sacrifice, asserted with such emphasis, affirms the fact of an atonement.

4. *Typical Sacrifices.*—In the statements respecting the sacrifice of Christ there are clear references to the ancient sacrifices; and its interpretation in the light of these references gives us the same fact of an atonement. But we shall not discuss this system; and a brief reference will answer for our purpose.

The great annual atonement has special prominence. Its many rites, divinely prescribed with exactness of detail, were sacredly observed. Its leading facts were few and simple, but of profound significance. The high-priest sacrificed a bullock in atonement for himself and family, and, entering with its blood into the holy of holies, sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat. Thus he found access into the divine presence. Then he selected two goats for an atonement for the people. One

¹ Heb. 9: 14, 25; see also chap. x, 5-12.

he sacrificed, and entering with its blood into the most holy place, sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat before the Lord. Then with his hands upon the head of the other, he confessed over it the sins of the people, and sent it away into the wilderness, thus signifying the bearing away of their sins.¹ Thus the high-priest made an atonement for sin.²

The whole idea of atonement may here be denied on an assumption that the means have no adequacy to the end; that it is not in the nature of such a ceremony or such a sacrifice to constitute a ground of forgiveness. It is conceded that there is therein no intrinsic atonement. This, indeed, is the Scripture view.³ But the idea of atonement is not, therefore, wanting. The divine reconciliation is real, the forgiveness of sin actual, but on the ground of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ—"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."⁴ His atonement was not yet formally made, but already existed as a provision of the redemptive economy, and efficacious for salvation. And the idea of atonement is as real in the typical sacrifice as in that which is intrinsically sufficient. Otherwise, the Levitical atonement has no typical office, and hence is utterly inexplicable.

We have thus the idea of atonement in the Levitical sacrifices, and the fact of a real atonement in the sacrifice of Christ. The former were substitutes for men in atonement for sin—typically, not efficaciously; while the latter, represented by them, and the ground of their

¹ Lev. 16: 5-22. ² Dr. John Pye Smith on Sacrifice, pp. 246, 247.

³ Heb. 10: 1-11.

⁴ Rev. 13: 8.

acceptance, is intrinsically the atonement. As divinely appointed in their sacrificial office, and typical therein of the priestly sacrifice of Christ, they give decisive testimony to the fact of an atonement in his death.

That the Levitical sacrifices of atonement, particularly in the great annual atonement, were typical of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, is clearly given in the Scriptures.¹ And combining type and antitype, with their characteristic facts, in one view, the proof of a real atonement is conclusive. Respecting the former, "Shall we content ourselves with merely saying that this was a symbol; but the question remains, of what was it a symbol? To determine that, let the several parts of the symbolic action be enumerated. Here is confession of sin—confession before God, at the door of his tabernacle—the substitution of a victim—the figurative transfer of sins to that victim—the shedding of blood, which God appointed to make atonement for the soul—the carrying the blood into the holiest place, the very permission of which clearly marked the divine acceptance—the bearing away of iniquity—and the actual reconciliation of the people to God. If, then, this is symbolical, it has nothing correspondent to it; it never had or can have any thing correspondent to it but the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, and the communication of the benefits of his passion in the forgiveness of sins to those that believe in him, and their reconciliation with God."²

5. *Priestly Intercession in Heaven.*—The intercession

¹ Heb. 9: 8–12; 10: 1.

² Watson: "Theological Institutes," vol. ii, p. 157.

of Christ in a priestly office fulfilled in heaven, is a fact clearly given in the Scriptures: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."¹ "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."²

Now mere intercession does not prove atonement; but such intercession does. It is in the order of the priestly office of Christ. This is clear from the texts cited, especially with their connections. It follows the atoning sacrifice of himself, and with clear reference to the service of the Levitical atonement. As the high-priest entered with the blood of the sacrifice into the most holy place, and sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, the very place of the divine presence and propitiation; so Christ entered with his own blood—not literally with it, but with its atoning virtue and the tokens of his sacrifice—into heaven itself, into the very presence of God, in the office of intercession. Such an intercession, the very pleas of which are in his vicarious sacrifice and blood, affirms the reality of atonement.

¹ Rom. 8: 34.

² Heb. 9: 12, 24.

CHAPTER III.

NECESSITY FOR ATONEMENT.

1. *Limitation of the Question.*—An inquiry into the necessity for an atonement might easily lead us into a very wide discussion. In its logical relations it is concerned with many leading topics of the question. There is specially a most intimate logical connection between the two questions of necessity and theory. It may be well to illustrate the fact. This may easily be done by reference to a few theories.

With a scheme of Moral influence all intrinsic necessity for an atonement is consistently denied. Sinners may be saved on their own repentance. Forgiveness is just as free without Christ as with him. The atonement is merely a provision of moral influence in aid of the required repentance.

The Mystical theory—a redemption in the mode of a spiritually sanitary union of Christ with humanity, either as a nature, or in its individuated personalities, or in its corporate organization as the Church—grounds the necessity for an atonement, accordingly, in some subjective imperfection of man rather than in his ethical state.

The theory of Satisfaction, in its distinctive Calvinian form, must base this necessity in the divine justice as absolutely requiring perfect obedience, or, on its failure and the occurrence of sin, an equivalent vicarious right-

eousness and punishment as the necessary justification and only salvation.

In the Governmental theory, the scientifically consistent necessity arises in the interest of moral government, and as an imperative requirement of some provision which may fulfill the rectoral office of penalty in the case of forgiveness.

In view of such an intimate connection between necessity and theory as concerned in the atonement, the whole question of necessity might be treated in connection with that of theories. Yet its separate discussion, at least so far as it is concerned in the doctrine which we shall maintain, will be in the order of a better method. So far as required in other theories it will be treated in connection with them.

2. *The Necessity a Truth of Scripture.*—In our witnessing facts we have given Scripture proofs of a necessity for atonement in the sufferings of Christ.¹ This necessity, as divinely revealed, is asserted in the most explicit and emphatic terms. It is given with all the force of logical implication in the requirement of faith in the redeeming Christ as the necessary condition of forgiveness and salvation. It is further verified as the only explanation of the sufferings and death of Christ. Further proof will be given in its proper place.

3. *Proof in the Mode of Mediation.*—The facts of the redemptive mediation of Christ are of no ordinary character. Indeed, they are so extraordinary as to require the profoundest necessity for their vindication under a specially providential economy. The incar-

¹ Chap. ii: I, 4, 5, 6.

nation of the Son of God is a marvelous event. Its deeper meaning we read only in the light of his own character and rank. In the form of God, he has a rightful glory in equality with him. This he surrenders, and takes, instead, the form of a servant, in the likeness of men. His estate is in the deepest abasement. He is a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He bears the reproaches and hatreds of men. His sufferings have unfathomed depths. After the profound self-humiliation in the incarnation, he yet further humbles himself and becomes obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.¹

The will of the Father is concurrent with the will of the Son in this whole transaction. While the Son comes in the gladness of filial obedience and the compassion of redeeming love, the Father sends him forth, and prepares for him a body for his priestly sacrifice.² The infinite sacrifice of this concurring love of the Father and the Son affirms the deepest necessity for an atonement as the ground of forgiveness.

Thus, on the authority of the Scriptures, in their most explicit and emphatic utterances, and by the requirement of faith in Christ as the condition of the salvation which he brings, and by the logic of all the cardinal facts which enter into his redeeming work, we have the necessity for an atonement in his vicarious sufferings and death.

¹ Psa 69: 9; Rom. 15: 3; Phil. 2: 6-8; 1 Tim. 3: 16.

² Psa. 40: 6-8; Heb. 10: 5-9.

I.

NECESSITY IN MORAL GOVERNMENT.

Whether the necessity for an atonement is manifest in the reason of the case or not does not directly affect the utterances of Scripture thereon ; but indirectly, it is a question of special interest. Such a necessity, clearly ascertained, will be helpful in determining the true doctrine, as the nature of the atonement must answer to its necessity. It will, also, be of service in the defense of the atonement, and in its commendation to a common acceptance in faith. Did cardinal facts, in intimate relation to the atonement, pronounce against it, or were they merely silent respecting its necessity, its maintenance would be far more difficult. The Scriptures are sufficient for evangelical minds. But many minds are not in such a state. To such the concurrence of reason with revelation is specially helpful to faith. There is such a concurrence on the necessity for atonement.

In treating the question of necessity, either of two methods might be adopted : first, to determine the relation of the atonement to forgiveness, and hence deduce its necessity ; or, second, to ascertain the hindrance to a mere administrative forgiveness, and thus find the necessity. The latter is the better method, especially as it mainly defers the question of theories to a more appropriate place. We ground the necessity in the fact and requirements of moral government.

1. *None without such Ground.*—Only in the fact of a divine moral government can there be a reason for any

question respecting the necessity for an atonement. If we are not under law to God we are without sin. If without sin, we have nothing to be forgiven. Hence there could be for us no necessary ground of forgiveness.

2. *Fact of a Moral Government.*—God being God, and the Creator of men, and men being what they are, a moral government is the profoundest moral necessity. We have a moral nature, with the powers of an ethical life. Our character is determined according to the development and use of these powers in active life. Herein is involved our profoundest personal interest. We also deeply affect each other, and after the manner of our own life. Here is a law of great evil. Nor would the fact be other, except infinitely worse, were we wholly without law from heaven. The less men know of a divine law, with its weightier obligations and sanctions, the lower they sink into moral corruption and ruin. The moral powers and the forces of evil are full of spontaneous impulse. Nor do they await the occasion of a revealed law for their corrupting and ruinous activity. And however the absence of all divine law might change our relation to judicial penalty, our moral ruin would be, nevertheless, inevitable and utter. Now, should we even concede God's indifference to his own claims upon our obedience and love, it would be irrational, and blasphemous even, to assume his indifference to all the interests of virtue and well-being in us. He cannot overlook us. His own perfections constrain his infinite regard for our welfare. Under the condition of such facts there is,

and there must be, a divine moral government over us. The moral consciousness of humanity affirms the fact of such a government.¹

II.

REQUISITES OF MORAL GOVERNMENT.

1. *Adjustment to Subjects.*—Within the moral realm subjects may differ: possibly, in some facts of their personal constitution; certainly, in their moral state and tendencies. A wise government must vary its provisions in adjustment to the requirement of such differences. In some facts the divine law must be the same for all. It must require the obedience of all; for such is the right of the divine Ruler, and the common obligation of his subjects. It must guard the rights and interests of all. Beyond such facts, yet for the reason of them, the provisions of law, as means to the great ends of moral government, should vary as subjects differ. The same principles which imperatively require a moral government for moral beings, also require its economy in adjustment to any considerable peculiarities of moral condition and tendency.

2. *Specially for Man.*—This law has special significance, and should not be overlooked in the present inquiry. We are seeking for the necessity of an atonement in the requirements of moral government; and we shall more readily find it in view of our own moral tendencies and needs. The atonement, while directly for man, has infinitely wider relations than the present

¹ Bishop Butler: "Analogy of Religion," part i, chapters ii, iii.
Dr. Gillett: "The Moral System."

sphere of humanity. Indirectly it concerns all intelligences, and is, no doubt, in adjustment to all moral interests.¹ Still, in its immediate purpose, it is a provision for the forgiveness and salvation of sinful men. The atonement is, therefore, a measure introduced into the divine government as immediately over us, and its special necessity must arise from the interests so directly involved.

i. A Law of Duty.—Subjects should know the will of the Sovereign. There are things to be done, and things not to be done. Nor can such things always be known either by reason or experience. This may be true even with the highest in perfection, and with every thought and feeling responsive to duty. Most certainly is it true of us. The mode in which the law of duty shall be given is not first in importance. It is the law itself that is so essential. How God may reveal his will to angels we know not, because we know neither his modes of expression nor their powers of apprehension. In some mode it is made known, and so becomes the law of their duty. And God has made known his will to us. This is chiefly done through revelation, though we have some light through the moral reason and the direct agency of the Holy Spirit. God gave a law to Adam, communicated his will to the patriarchs, wrote the decalogue on tables of stone for Israel and for man, spake often to the people by the prophets. And Christ summed up the law of Christian duty in the two great commandments. It is not requisite that every particular duty should be given in a special statute. This

¹ Chapter x.

would be for us an impracticable code. We have the law of duty, in a far better form, in the great moral principles given in the Gospels. And thus we have the divine will revealed to us as the law of our duty.

ii. The Sanction of Rewards.—In the highest conceivable perfection, with the clearest apprehension of duty, with every sentiment responsive to its behests and with no tendency nor temptation to the contrary, obedience would be assured without the sanction of rewards. In such a state, however munificent the divine favors might be to such obedience, penalty would have no necessary governmental function. But when obedience is difficult and its failure a special liability—where there is spiritual darkness and apathy, a strong tendency to evil, and the incoming of much fierce temptation—the case is very different. In such a state, duty must have the support of pending rewards. They must form a part of the law, and have as distinct an announcement as its precepts. Otherwise, government is void of a necessary adjustment to the moral state of its subjects.

Such is the requirement of our moral condition. With us there are many hinderances to duty, and the liability to sin is great. There is moral darkness, spiritual apathy, a strong tendency to evil, and the incoming of much temptation. We deeply need the moral sanctions of law in the promise of good and the imminence of penalty. And however defective the virtue wrought merely under the influence of such motives, they are clearly necessary to the ordinary morality of life. Whether in view of human or divine law, or of

the history of the race, every candid man must confess the necessity of such support to the social and public morality, and that without it there could be no true civil life. It was in the conviction of such a truth that the ancient sages asserted the necessity of religion to the life of the State and the well-being of society, and that the ancient lawgivers and rulers maintained religious institutions and services for the sake of the support which the expectation of rewards in a future state gave to law and duty in the present life.¹ And for us as a race there is the profoundest need of penalty as a fact of law. With the vicious, as the many would be without the law as a school-master, the imminence of penalty is a far weightier sanction of law than the promise of reward.

3. *Divine Apportionment of Rewards.*—It is the prerogative of the divine Ruler to determine the rewards of human conduct. No other can determine them either rightfully or wisely. Specially are we void of both the prerogative and the capacity for their proper apportionment. Even on the plane of secular duties and interests, and with the gathered experience of ages, questions of penalty are still the perplexing problems of the most highly civilized States. And surely we should not assume a capacity for the adjustment of law and its rewards to the requirements of the divine government. But God comprehends the whole question, and has full prerogative in its decisions. He knows what measure of rewards is befitting his justice and

¹ Bishop Warburton: "The Divine Legation of Moses;" books ii, iii.

goodness, and required by the interests of his moral government. And, accordingly, he has given us the law of our duty, with its announced rewards of obedience and sin.

III.

MEASURE OF PENALTY.

1. *No Arbitrary Appointment.*—God determines the measure of penalty, but not arbitrarily. His infinite sovereignty asserts no disregard of the principles of justice, nor of the rights and interests of his subjects. He is a wise and good Sovereign, as he is a just and holy one.

2. *Determining Laws:*—

i. *The Demerit of Sin.*—Sin has intrinsic demerit. It deserves to be punished. And God has the exact measure of its desert. Whether divine justice must, in the obligation of judicial rectitude, punish sin in the full measure of its demerit, we shall have a more appropriate place to inquire. But so far penalty may be carried. Divine justice, in its distinctive retributive function, has no reason for pause short of this. In its own free course it would so punish all sin. But justice cannot carry its penalties beyond the demerit of sin. Nor can it suffer any interests of moral government to carry them beyond this limit. Nay, *punishment* cannot go beyond. Whatever transcends the intrinsic demerit of sin ceases in all that transcendence to be punishment. Hence, while the inherent turpitude of sin is the real and only ground of punishment, its own measure is a limitation of the penalty of law.

ii. *The Rectoral Function of Penalty.*—It is an impor-

tant office of penalty to conserve the interests of the government. And we here use the term government, not in any ideal or abstract sense, but as including the divine Sovereign ruling in its administration, and the moral beings over whom he rules. The rights and glory of God are concerned: the profoundest interests of men are concerned. So far we may speak with certainty, however it may be with other orders of moral beings. Hence the rectoral function of penalty is a most important one. Its importance rises in the measure of the interests which it must conserve.

It must fulfill its rectoral office specially as a restraint upon sin. It must, therefore, be wisely adjusted in its measure to this specific end. Two facts condition its restraining force: one, the strength of our tendency to sin; the other, the tone of our motivity to penalty as an impending infliction. Both of these facts deeply concern the measure of penalty required by the highest interests of moral government. With a strong tendency to sin, and a feeble motivity to the imminence of penalty—facts so broadly and deeply written in human history—penalties must be the severer. The interests of moral government may require them even in the full measure of the demerit of sin. Up to this limit, whatever God may see to be requisite to these interests will not fail of his appointment as the penalty of sin. All the fundamental principles which determine his institution of the wisest and best government must so determine him respecting the measure of penalty.

IV.

NECESSITY FOR PENALTY.

We do not allege such a necessity for penalty as arises in physical causation. The physical evil and moral wretchedness which follow upon our sinful conduct, but really as consequent to our constitution and relations, are not strictly of the nature of punishment, though such is a very common view. That sin brings misery is in the order of the divine constitution of things. It is not clear that there could be such a constitution of moral beings that suffering would not follow upon sin. Indeed, the contrary is manifest. But what so follows as a natural result, though in an order of things divinely constituted, is not strictly penal. Such naturally-consequent evil may have in the divine plan an important ministry in the economy of moral government. But punishment, strictly, is a divine infliction of penalty upon sin in the order of a judicial administration. The necessity for penalty, therefore, is not from necessary causation, but from sufficient moral grounds. Penalty has such a necessity in the interest of moral government, except as its office may be fulfilled by some substitutional measure. In the moral realm there is a divine moral Ruler; and the vital truth of the present question must be viewed in the light of his perfections and rectoral relations. In such light the moral necessity for penalty is manifest.

1. *From its Rectoral Office.*—Omitting other things for the present, penalty has a necessary office in the good of moral government. Justice itself is directly

concerned. Nor is any requirement of justice more imperative. The honor and authority of government must be maintained for the sake of the divine Ruler therein, and for the sake of the moral beings over whom he rules. Sin must be restrained and moral order maintained for the honor of God and the good of moral beings. The innocent must be protected against injury and wrong. Justice cannot overlook these profound interests. In such neglect it would cease to be justice. It must sacredly guard them. A necessary power for their protection lies in its penalty. This it may not omit, except through some measure equally fulfilling the same rectoral office, while forgiveness is granted to repenting sinners.

2. *From the Divine Holiness.*—God, as a perfectly holy being, must give support to righteousness, and place barriers in the way of sin. He must seek, in the use of all proper means, the prevention or utmost restraint of sin. But in the moral state of humanity penalty is a necessary force for such limitation. Lift the restraint of its imminence from the soul and conscience of men, and, wicked as they now are, they would be immensely worse. Even a presumptive hope of impunity emboldens sin. The divine forbearance in the deferment of merited punishment is made the occasion of a deeper impenitence, and a more persistent impiety: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."¹ And a releasement from all amenability to penalty would be to

¹ Ecclesiastes 8: 11.

many a divine license to the freest vicious indulgence. The divine holiness, therefore, must require the restraint of sin through the ministry of penalty, except as the interest of righteousness may be protected through some other means.

3. *From the Divine Goodness.*—Nor less must the divine goodness support the punitive office of justice. Sin brings misery. It must bring misery, even in the absence of all infliction of penalty. The race would be far more wretched in the absence of all penalty than it is under an amenability to its rectoral inflictions. While, therefore, God punishes with reluctance, and with profound sympathy for the suffering sinner, yet, as a God of love, he must maintain the office of merited penalty in the interest of human happiness. The only ground of its surrender, even on the part of the divine goodness, must be found in some vicarious measure equally answering the same end.

4. *A Real Necessity for Atonement.*—The logical result is, the necessity for an atonement. Without such a provision sinners cannot be forgiven and saved. The impossibility is concluded by the facts and principles which this chapter unfolds. The necessity for the redemptive mediation of Christ lies ultimately in the perfections of God as moral Ruler. It is, therefore, most imperative.

5. *Nature of the Atonement Indicated.*—We have not yet reached the place for the more formal discussion of the true theory of atonement; yet certain facts and principles have already come into view which so clearly

indicate its nature, that their doctrinal meaning may properly be noted here.

We have the truth of a divine moral government as the ground-fact in the necessity for an atonement. We have found the facts and principles of such a government strongly affirmative of this necessity. They thus respond to the explicit affirmations of Scripture thereon. Further, we have found this necessity to be grounded in the profoundest interests of moral government, for the protection of which the penalties of the divine justice have a necessary function. Here we have the real hinderance to a mere administrative forgiveness, and, therefore, the real necessity for an atonement. The true office of atonement follows accordingly. The vicarious sufferings of Christ answer for the obligation of justice and the office of penalty in the interest of moral government, so that such interest does not suffer through the forgiveness of sin. This is, however, not the whole service of the redemptive mediation of Christ, but a chief fact in its more specific office, and one answering to the deepest necessity for an atonement.

The nature of the atonement is thus determined. The vicarious sufferings of Christ are a provisory substitute for penalty, and not the actual punishment of sin. He is not such a substitute in penalty as to preserve the same retributive administration of justice as in the actual punishment of sinners. The sufferings of Christ, endured for us as sinners, so fulfill the obligation of justice and the office of penalty in the interest of moral government as to render forgiveness, on

proper conditions, entirely consistent therewith. Such is the nature of the atonement.

Such a view fully answers to the correlate relation of God and men as Sovereign and subjects, and to the facts of their sinfulness and subjection to his righteous displeasure and judicial condemnation. Sin offends his justice and love, incurs his righteous displeasure, and constitutes in them punitive desert. Such are the facts which the Scriptures so fully recognize. And God, as a righteous Ruler, must inflict merited penalty upon sin, not, indeed, in the gratification of any mere personal resentment, nor in the satisfaction of an absolute retributive justice, but in the interest of moral government, or find some rectorally compensatory measure for the remission of penalty. Such a measure there is in the redemptive mediation of Christ. The conclusion gives us an atonement, not by an absolute substitution in punishment, but by a **provisory substitution in suffering.**

CHAPTER IV.

SCHEMES WITHOUT ATONEMENT.

SOME hold the fact of salvation who yet deny a vicarious atonement. Such consistently deny its necessity. There is, in their view, no element of divine justice, nor interest of moral government, which makes it necessary. Sin may be forgiven, or ultimate salvation attained without it. These great blessings have other grounds or modes. In the order of this position, and as consistency requires, certain grounds or modes are alleged as entirely sufficient for our forgiveness or future happiness. Thus we have schemes of salvation without an atonement in Christ, and in the denial of its necessity. It may be proper to test such schemes.

I.

AFTER THE PENALTY.

Universalism and Calvinism differ widely in their completed systems—if we may speak of the former as a system. They are infinitely apart respecting the demerit of sin and the measure of its merited penalty. Yet the two are at one in the cardinal principle that sin must be punished according to its desert. We speak of these systems in their more regular form, not in all their phases. But such a principle in Universalism, as in any non-atonement scheme, gives no place for salvation.

1. *Salvation Excluded.*—In any true sense of the term, salvation is possible only as a real forgiveness of sin, or its substitutional punishment, is possible. Where the penalty is fully suffered by the offender, as Universalism asserts it must be, there is no salvation. When a criminal has suffered the full penalty awarded him, his discharge is no matter of grace, and his further punishment would be an injustice. There is neither forgiveness nor salvation in his releasement. On the scheme of Universalism, the same is true in every instance of divine penalty.

Such a scheme is false to the clearly revealed fact of forgiveness; false to the soteriology of the Scriptures. The fact is deeply wrought into the Gospel of Christ that he is a Saviour through the forgiveness of sin; a Saviour from the punishment of sin; and such a Saviour through an atonement in his blood. These facts have been set forth and verified by the Scriptures, and need not here be repeated.

2. *Final Happiness not a Salvation.*—The denial of ultimate happiness as a salvation is a logical sequence of this scheme. The same is true whether merited punishment is limited to this life or continues for a greater or less time in the next. There is no salvation in the termination of such a punishment, whether in the present or future world. Justice has no further penal claim. And while the happiness then beginning and flowing on forever might be far above any merit in us, still it would not be a salvation. Certainly it would be no such a salvation as the Scriptures reveal in Christ. In the truest and deepest sense fu-

ture happiness is a salvation through his atonement.¹ Hence the scheme which precludes this fact cannot be true.

3. *Impossible in Endless Penalty.*—A scheme of ultimate and endless happiness, after a full personal satisfaction of justice in penalty, must limit the duration of punishment, however long it may continue in a future state. If penalty be eternal, there can be no after-state of happiness. Here arises a great question, the discussion of which would lead us quite aside from the subject in hand. We simply note in passing, that the Scriptures express the duration of penalty in terms most significant of its eternity. What seems specially decisive is, that it is so expressed when placed in immediate contrast with the endless reward of the righteous: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."² The same original word—*αἰώνιον*—expresses the duration in the two cases; and there is no more apparent reason for its limitation in the former than in the latter. In such a destiny on account of sin there can be no state of happiness after the penalty. Nor can the necessity for an atonement be so set aside.

II.

IN SOVEREIGN FORGIVENESS.

The necessity for an atonement is denied on the assumption that God, in mere sovereignty or on a merely personal disposition of kindness, and without regard to

¹ John 3: 14-16; 6: 47-51; 10: 27, 28; Rom. 5: 20, 21; 6: 23; 2 Tim. 2: 10; Heb. 5: 9; 9: 15; 1 Pet. 5: 10; Rev. 5: 9, 10; 7: 14-17.

² Matt. 25: 46.

the ends of justice in the interest of moral government, may and does freely forgive sin. There are many objections to this view, and such as entirely discredit it.

1. *An Assumption against Facts.*—That God forgives and saves sinners on a mere arbitrary sovereignty or pleasure, and without regard to the requirements of moral government, is without proof, and the sheerest assumption. Moreover, the facts of a providential history, now stretching away through many centuries, are full in its contradiction. Were the mere pleasure of God, as a kindly personal disposition, his only law, as this position assumes, there would be no instance of punishment. But there are many such. No one can rationally deny it. Now these facts are contradictory to such a mode of forgiveness. As the generations press to their altars with conscience of sin and with sacrifices of atonement, the voice of humanity, in the deepest utterances of its religious consciousness, pronounces against it. Revelation, in words the most explicit and emphatic, confirms the judgment of humanity.

2. *Contrary to Divine Government.*—There is a moral government. There is such a government as divinely instituted. It is without any provision for a mere administrative forgiveness. Nor can it admit any such forgiveness, because contrary to its own principles and measures. God, in full view of our moral state, and with infinite regard for our good, has instituted his government in adjustment to our duty and welfare. Penalty itself arises out of the requirement and interest of moral government. Hence its suspension without regard to any new provision would be contrary to

government as divinely instituted, and also to the divine perfections in so ordering its provisions. Further, it would set the divine administration in direct opposition to the divine word. In clearest terms God has announced the penalties of sin. Now it is presumed that he will sovereignly interfere, and, without regard to any new provision, grant a universal forgiveness. Surely it is a bold assumption that God will so contradict himself, and set his administration against his own law.

3. *Subversive of all Government.*—If forgiveness is so granted it must be universal. There could be no other law of salvation. And, otherwise, it would neither answer for our need nor for the divine impartiality. But with such universal forgiveness government really no longer exists. Justice makes no practical distinction between obedience and sin.

A law of duty without a penalty for transgression is a mere advisory rule of life, and, for us, void of necessary enforcing sanction. It would virtually say to every man, Do as you please; when it is certain that most men would please to do wrong, and moral ruin be the result. How long could civil government be thus maintained? A partial uncertainty of penalty, a presumptive hope of impunity, emboldens crime. The license of a universal forgiveness would open the flood-gates of evil and hasten the social and political ruin.

As a race we are even more propense to the disregard of moral duty and to sin against God. It may be claimed, and freely granted, that the grace of divine forgiveness is a most weighty reason for grateful piety.

But the common moral apathy would be insensible to its persuasive force. Facts clearly show that with most men the divine goodness pleads in vain. Even the cross, with the admission of its atoning love, so pleads in vain. Delays of punishment, with salvation for their end, are perverted to a more persistent evil doing. For such a race the free remission of all penalty would be subversive of all government, and whelm in ruin the profound moral interests which the divine government must conserve. Such inevitable consequences utterly discredit the assumption of forgiveness and salvation on mere sovereignty.

III.

THROUGH REPENTANCE.

It is specially urged that repentance is a proper and entirely sufficient ground of forgiveness, and, hence, that there is no necessity for an atonement. This is a common position with Rationalistic schemes.

1. *Repentance Necessary*.—The necessity for a true repentance, in order to forgiveness and salvation, is not only conceded, but firmly maintained in any proper doctrine of atonement. No provision of a redemptive economy could supersede this necessity. Impenitence after sinning is self-justification, and the very spirit of rebellion; while penitence is the only self-condemnation, and the only return to obedience. There must, therefore, be a genuine repentance. There can be neither forgiveness nor any real redemption from sin without it.

2. *Only Kind Naturally Possible*.—The logic of this question will not concede the gratuitous assumption of a true repentance as possible in the resources of our

own nature. A soul with the disabilities of depravity, and under the power of sin, cannot so repent. This accords with the facts of our moral condition as clearly given in the Scriptures, and also with a common experience and observation. There is a certain kind of repentance within our own power. We instinctively shrink from punishment, and, therefore, necessarily regret the sins which expose us to its infliction. But such regret implies no true sense of sin, and constitutes no necessary repentance. It is merely what the Scriptures designate as the sorrow of the world working death, and so discriminate it from a true godly sorrow for sin, working repentance unto salvation.¹ The former repentance, and the only kind naturally possible, is no proper ground of forgiveness. Nor has it any true redemptive power in the moral life.

3. *Such Repentance Inevitable.*—As the product of an indestructible element of our mental constitution, such a repentance is inevitable, and hence must be universal. As we necessarily shrink from penalty, so we necessarily regret the evil deeds which subject us to its infliction. But what so arises naturally, and without any element of true contrition, can be no sufficient ground of forgiveness. Besides, as a necessary product, and therefore universal, it would involve a universal forgiveness. The result would be the subversion of all government, just as on a universal sovereign forgiveness. With such a policy no civil government could be maintained. Nor could a divine moral government be so maintained.

¹ 2 Cor. 7: 9, 10.

Nor is there validity in any rejoinder, that as the Gospel freely offers forgiveness on a repentance possible to all, it might hence be universal. This is true, but only in an economy of grace which provides for a true repentance, and gives to the ministry of forgiveness the moral support of the redemptive mediation of Christ.

4. *Sin Unrealized*.—In the repentance naturally possible, sin is neither felt nor confessed, in a true sense of its intrinsic evil, but only selfishly, on account of its results in personal suffering. It, therefore, can have no real redemptive or reformatory power in the moral life. And even were forgiveness permissible on the ground of so defective a repentance, a true salvation is not so possible. Forgiveness so easily granted never could bring the turpitude of sin home to the moral consciousness. To this extent would be the loss of moral benefit. The intenser the sense of sin, and the profounder the grateful love for the mercy of forgiveness, the more thorough is the moral recovery and salvation. It is easy to decide where there are such experiences. They are realized only through the helping and forgiving grace of redemption. As souls gather around the cross, they have the deepest contrition for sin and the most grateful love for the gracious forgiveness.¹ Innumerable facts of religious experience so witness. And even if we could set aside the deeper necessity for an atonement, there is yet a profound moral necessity for the redemptive mediation of Christ in order to the moral recovery and salvation of the soul.

¹ Ullman: "The Sinlessness of Jesus," p. 251.

5. *True Repentance only by Grace.*—The moral disabilities consequent upon depravity and sin render a true repentance impossible in the resources of our own nature. Such a state is one of spiritual blindness, insensibility, impotence, death. So the Scriptures represent it.¹ Hence, they attribute a genuine repentance, both in its privilege and possibility, to the grace of the atonement and the agency of the Holy Spirit so procured. Thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise again, that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name. And a special office of the Holy Spirit, in a mission provided through the redemptive mediation of Christ, is to bring the sense of sin home to the conscience in a conviction necessary to a true repentance. So Christ, having redeemed us with his blood, is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins.²

The gracious ability and disposition to a true repentance are through the *evangelical* mission of the Spirit. Only thus have we an explanation of the mighty work wrought on that memorable day of Pentecost. The Spirit was shed forth, not only upon the apostles in the power of preaching, but also upon the people in the power of religious conviction. And no one who denies this mission of the Spirit as a procurement of the redemptive mediation of Christ, can account for the converting power of the Gospel on this day of Pentecost, or for the work of religious revival in the history of Christianity. Hence it is an utterly futile attempt

¹ John 6: 44; Rom. 5: 6; 8: 3, 4; Eph. 2: 1, 2; 4: 18; Col. 2: 13.

² Luke 24: 46, 47; John 16: 7-11; Acts 5: 31.

to supersede the necessity for an atonement with the sufficiency of repentance, while the repentance itself is possible only through the grace of the atonement.¹

IV.

SPECIAL FACTS.

There are a few facts specially urged against the necessity for an atonement which should have a brief notice. They are such as may be presented in a plausible light, but are without logical force as urged in the argument.

1. *Forgiving one Another.*—We are required to forgive one another, and without any regard to an atonement. Now it is claimed, that if God requires us so to forgive, he will himself thus forgive.² Respecting our own duty no issue is made. Such a requirement is clearly given in the Scriptures.³ But there is nothing, either in the nature or the manner of it, which furnishes any ground for the inference that the divine forgiveness is without regard to an atonement. Indeed, one of the texts given in the reference, and which Wor-

¹ On the insufficiency of repentance as a ground of forgiveness: Bishop Butler: "Analogy of Religion," part ii, chap. v, IV, V; Magee: "Atonement and Sacrifice," dissertations iv, v; Richard Watson: "Theological Institutes," vol. ii, pp. 96–102; Joseph Gilbert: "The Christian Atonement," pp. 217, 466; Marshal Randles: "Substitution: Atonement," pp. 179–186. Any argument in these works proceeding on the ground of an absolute necessity for penal satisfaction, we think invalid. But there is little of this, as neither of these authors represents a doctrine of atonement grounded in such a principle.

² Worcester: "The Atoning Sacrifice," pp. 127–129.

³ Matt. 18: 21, 22; Eph. 4: 32; Col. 3: 13.

cester cites for his position, is entirely to the contrary. "Forgiving one another, even as God *for Christ's sake* hath forgiven you."

Account is also made of texts in which there is a coupling of our forgiving with the divine forgiving. If we forgive, we shall be forgiven; if we forgive not, we shall not be forgiven.¹ But the matter is still our duty of forgiving one another, accompanied, indeed, with its conditional relation to the divine forgiveness, but with no intimation that this is without regard to the atonement in Christ.

There is another view of this case, and decisive against the inference adverse to the necessity for an atonement. This duty of forgiveness is the duty of private persons simply, and without any rectoral prerogative or obligation. One must so forgive, as the offense concerns himself only. Even the Christian ruler must so forgive. But who ever thinks of his carrying this duty into his administration? When the offense is a crime in the law it has public relations, and he has rectoral obligations in the case. What he may and should do in a merely private relation he must not do as a minister of the law. God is moral ruler. Hence our forgiving one another has no such analogy to the divine forgiveness as to be the ground of an inference adverse to the necessity for an atonement.

2. *Parental Forgiveness.*—There is properly such a forgiveness, yet there must be a limit even here, the disregard of which brings serious evil. Besides, the family circle is small, and rather private than public in

¹ Matt. 6: 12, 14, 15; Luke 6: 37.

its economy. It is constituted in peculiarly intimate and affectionate relations. It is, therefore, eminently a sphere for governing through the moral influences hence arising, or so rendered possible. But what may be fitting here is wholly inadmissible in a government of broad domain, and conditioned by very different influences and tendencies. The economy of the family will not answer for the government of the State, much less for the divine government of the world or the universe. God is ruler in a universal moral realm, and no propriety of mere parental forgiveness can prove that he may consistently forgive without an atonement.

3. *Parable of the Prodigal Son.*—The attempt to press this beautiful parable into the service of anti-atonement schemes is in the natural movement of Rationalistic thought. "It is remarkable how perfectly this parable precludes every idea of the necessity of vicarious suffering, in order to the pardon of the penitent sinner. Had it been the special purpose of our Lord to provide an antidote for such a doctrine, it is difficult to conceive what could have been devised better adapted to that end."¹ Even Mr. Chubb, certainly without much sympathy with Christianity, has a treatise on this parable, in which he insists that by special design it teaches the sufficiency of repentance as the ground of forgiveness; that the free and gracious forgiveness of this father exemplifies the free and gracious forgiveness of the heavenly Father; and that such is at once the dictate of reason and the Gospel of Christ.

¹ Worcester: "The Atoning Sacrifice," p. 215.

But it is certainly a queer kind of exegesis and logic which will claim a passage of Scripture that is entirely silent upon the atonement as decisive against both its reality and necessity. There is the greater violation of the laws of interpretation, because so many passages do specially treat the atonement, and in a manner decisive of its reality and necessity. Besides, all the freeness of the divine forgiveness which this parable represents, and which we gratefully accept, is in the fullest consistency with the doctrine of a vicarious atonement.

There is in this hasty and illogical method a neglect of vital and determining facts, and the assumption of a completeness of analogy which does not exist. The father in this parable appears and acts simply as such. Had he been a ruler also, and his son a criminal in the law, then, however gracious his fatherly affection, his rectoral obligations would have required recognition and observance. The vicious logic of this hasty method is thus manifest. It wrongly assumes that God's sole relation to moral beings is that of Father. This error utterly vitiates the conclusion. As we have previously noted, God is a moral Ruler as well as a gracious Father. Here is the vital, yet utterly neglected, distinction between the earthly and the heavenly Father. And what God might do simply as a Father, he may not do as moral Ruler.

Nor do these facts rob this parable of its lesson of grace. It is still true that the doctrine of atonement is in the fullest consistency with such a lesson. As this father graciously forgave his repenting son, so does God graciously forgive his repenting children.

The one fact illustrates the other. But the Scriptures decide, and reason accords therewith, that it is through the atonement in Christ that God so forgives. He had no need for an atonement in his fatherly disposition, but only in the requirements of his rectoral obligations. Now that an atonement has been made, he may and does forgive his repenting children in all the fullness of his paternal grace and love. Thus we hold the full meaning of this lesson. We admire its grace. There is one of an infinitely deeper pathos. We read it in the sacrifice of the cross, as the atoning provision of the Father's love, that he might reach us in a gracious forgiveness.

CHAPTER V.

THEORIES OF ATONEMENT.

I.

PRELIMINARY.

1. *Earlier Views.*—In the earlier history of the Church the redemption in Christ was received and given forth rather as a fact than as a doctrine. It was then, as it must ever be, the central truth of the Gospel. Christ was every-where proclaimed as a Saviour through his sacrificial death. Forgiveness and salvation were freely offered in his blood. But the great truth had its proclamation in the terms of Scripture rather than in the formulas of doctrine. This was proper, as it was natural. It is proper now, and will ever be so. Redemption, in all the preciousness of its truth and grace, has a living association with its own Scripture terms; and a disregard for this connection could not be other than a serious detriment. There were early utterances that well accord with strictly doctrinal views; still there was no formal construction of a doctrine.¹

Then came the singular notion of redemption by a ransom to Satan. It is not agreed when, nor with whom, it originated. Some find in Irenæus, of the second

¹ Oxenham: "Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement," pp. 112-114; Knapp: "Christian Theology," p. 480; Professor Smeaton: "The Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement," pp. 480-493; Dr. Dale: "The Atonement," pp. 269-278.

century, its first representative, while others would entirely clear him of such a view. It certainly has a representative in the very gifted but speculative Origen, of the third century. Nor did it run its career without finding entertainment in the great and versatile mind of Augustine. It flourished in the Patristic period, and held its position until the beginning of the Scholastic, or the time of Anselm, late in the eleventh century.¹

This very strange opinion was, probably, first suggested by certain texts of Scripture which represent us as in captivity or bondage to Satan, and our redemption by Christ as a deliverance from his possession and power. These representations may have suggested the idea of a right to us in Satan—such a right as that in which slaves or captives in war were held. He had conquered us, and brought us into his possession. In the prevalent ideas of the time this was a valid and rightful possession. Hence, probably, came the idea of the death of Christ as a ransom to Satan for the canceling of this claim.

The view has a commercial sense—such as at a later period constituted a phase of the theory of Satisfaction, but wherein the ransom is paid to God. But this Patristic scheme could not be permanent, and the marvel is that it continued so long. It is so incongruous to all cardinal facts so related to the atonement as to be decisive of its nature, that its dismissal was a necessary result of their intelligent apprehension.

¹ Hagenbach: "History of Doctrines," vol. i, pp. 192, 193; Dr Shedd: "History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii, pp. 212-226; Oxenham: "The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement," pp. 114-124.

2. *Scientific Treatment.*—The treatment of the atonement in a scientific, or more exact doctrinal manner, really began with Anselm, late in the eleventh century. His book,¹ though but a small one, is not improperly characterized as an “epoch-making book.” It fell far short of controlling the doctrine of the Church on the atonement, yet it exerted a strong influence upon after discussions and opinions, whether accordant or in dissent. It furnished, though not in the full scientific sense usually claimed, a basis for the doctrine of Satisfaction as constructed in the Reformed soteriology. Reviews of the scheme of Anselm are so common to histories of doctrine, systems of theology, and monographic discussions of atonement, that there is little need of special reference.²

We question neither the intellectual strength nor the intense religious earnestness of Anselm. And both are deeply wrought into his “*Cur Deus Homo*.” That the usual estimate of his work greatly exaggerates the scientific result we as little question. Such exaggeration is specially with his more sympathetic reviewers. Dr. Shedd may be given as an instance.³ The excess of merit, especially in its scientific phase, ascribed to the treatise of Anselm, must be apparent to any one upon a proper comparison in the case.

¹ “*Cur Deus Homo*.” Translated in “*Bib. Sacra*,” xi, 729 ; xii, 52

² Ritschl: “*History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*,” pp. 22–35 ; Hagenbach. “*History of Doctrines*,” vol. ii, pp. 32–38 ; Professor Smeaton: “*The Apostles’ Doctrine of the Atonement*,” pp. 510–520 ; “*Oxenham*: “*The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement*,” pp. 166–174.

³ “*History of Christian Doctrine*,” vol. ii, pp. 273–286.

Anselm emphasizes certain principles or facts as fundamental, and makes them the ground of his doctrine of atonement. Sin is the withholding from God his rightful claim, and is to him, on account of his character, an infinite wrong. The sinner is thus brought into an infinite indebtedness to the divine honor. This debt must be paid. God must not and cannot surrender his own personal right and honor, as he would do in a mere gratuitous forgiveness. The sinner never can, by any personal conduct, satisfy this claim. Therefore he must suffer the full punishment of his sins, or, as the only alternative, satisfaction must be rendered by another.

It follows that the only salvation is through the compensatory service of a divine Mediator. In this exigency the Son of God, in compassion for perishing sinners, was incarnated in their nature, and in their behalf gave himself up in holy obedience and suffering to the Father. On account of his *theanthropic* character, his obedience and death are a full compensation to the violated honor of God, and, therefore, a true and sufficient ground of forgiveness.¹

But neither essential element of the Satisfaction atonement, especially as scientifically wrought into this doctrine, is distinctly given by Anselm. There is wanting both the fact of substitution and of imputation as scientifically linked in the Reformed doctrine.

By common consent, the substitutive office of the active obedience of Christ is not in the scheme of Anselm.

¹ Neander: "History of the Church," vol. iv, pp. 498, 499; Knapp: "Christian Theology," p. 402.

This view was first opened by Thomas Aquinas, but long waited for its completion.¹

Nor did Anselm maintain the distinct view of penal substitution in redemption. He is so credited, but when interpreted after the ideas so fully wrought into the Reformed soteriology. Certain avowed principles respecting the nature of sin and the necessity for divine satisfaction, in case of forgiveness, might imply a penal substitution, and do so imply in the doctrine of Satisfaction—a fact which gives occasion and currency to such interpretation of Anselm. But he never gave them such a meaning, nor found in penal substitution their necessary implication. He does assert that punishment or satisfaction must follow every sin: "*Necesse est ut omne peccatum satisfactio aut poena sequatur.*"² Here, however, punishment and satisfaction are discriminated and taken as alternately necessary, while, in the doctrine of Satisfaction the punishment of sin has no alternative. It is the only possible satisfaction of justice, and the two terms are really one in meaning; the ministry of justice varying only by an exchange of penal subjects, not in the execution of penalty. Anselm propounded no such doctrine of satisfaction by penal substitution. Nor are we without the support of good authority in so writing.³

Anselm represents the mediation of Christ in holy

Dr. Shedd: "History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii, pp. 309, 310.
Opera Omnia, (Migne's,) Tomus Primus, 381.

³ Neander: "History of the Church," vol. iv, p. 500; Prof. Bruce: "The Humiliation of Christ," p. 353; Oxenham: "The Catholic Doctrine of the Atonement," p. 172.

obedience and suffering as infinitely meritorious, and, therefore, as justly entitled to an infinitely great reward. But as an absolutely perfect being, and in possession of all blessedness, he was not himself properly rewardable: therefore the merited reward may, and on his preference should, go to sinners in forgiveness and salvation.¹ But the doctrine, in its principles and structure, is very different from the doctrine of Satisfaction, and in some of its facts really very like the Middle theory.²

3. *Popular Number of Theories.*—Historically, or in popular enumeration, theories of atonement are many. Nor is this strange. The subject is one of the profoundest. The facts which it concerns are of stupendous character. Its relations to the great questions of theology and philosophy are vitally intimate. In scientific treatment it should be accordant to the system of doctrines into which it is wrought, and to the philosophy in which the system is grounded. Further, some minds are given to speculation and to fanciful views, or, for a lack of proper analysis and construction, to take some one fact—perhaps a merely incidental one—for the whole truth, while others would timidly avoid the deeper principles of the question. In such facts we have reason enough for many theories.

Yet authors widely differ respecting the number. Dr. Hodge enumerates five, but omits material modifications, while yet bringing them fully into his discussion.³ Professor Crawford names thirteen theories as

¹ "Bibliotheca Sacra," vol. xii, pp. 80–82.

² Chap. v, II, 6.

³ "Systematic Theology," vol. II, pp. 563–589.

substitutes for what he chooses to call the Catholic doctrine—the Calvinistic doctrine of Satisfaction. Then he adds the later theory of Dr. Bushnell, thus giving us in all fifteen.¹ The Rev. Alford Cave names as many.² Such large enumeration, however, is superficial, and made with little regard to analysis and scientific classification. In the same manner the number might be carried much higher, as must be apparent to any one familiar with the current of opinion on the redemptive work of Christ.

4. *Scientific Enumeration.*—The truth to be interpreted in the doctrine of atonement is, the work of Christ in our salvation. But he can save us only by some work or influence within us, or with God for us, or by both. Such work or influence, whatever it is, must answer to the need in the case. Some need there must be, else a redemptive mediation has neither place nor office. Many who deny an absolute need will yet admit a relative one, and so urgent as to give propriety and value to a redemptive economy.

Two facts vitally concern the question of need, respecting which there should be a common agreement: one, that we are sinful and of sinful tendency; the other, that we can be saved only in a deliverance from sin and in a moral harmony with God. Without such facts there is no place for the redemptive work of Christ and no saving office which he can fulfill.

What, then, is the need for the redemptive mediation of Christ in a salvation so realized? Why cannot man

¹ "The Scripture Doctrine of Atonement," pp. 285–395.

² "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," pp. 14–16

achieve his own deliverance from sin and harmonize himself with God? Why cannot God achieve both without a mediation in Christ? Every theory of atonement that may properly be called such, must answer to these questions. Every theory must, in logical consistency, accord with the answer given. The true theory will be found in accord with the true answer.

We thus have principles whereby we may test theories, and determine their legitimacy or truth. Some give a determining position to one fact in the need, some to another. Some find all the need in the moral disabilities of man; others find all in God. Every theory must take its place in a scientific classification according to the dominant fact of need which it alleges.

By these same principles we may greatly reduce the popular number of theories—such as given by Professor Crawford. Such reduction is specially possible respecting theories wholly grounded in certain disabilities of our moral state. The subjective facts of moral disability, out of which the need for a redemptive mediation is alleged to arise, may be numerically many, and yet so one in kind that one objective law of redemptive help will answer for all. And the law of redemptive help, though revealed in many facts, may still be one law, and working only in one mode. Hence, theories of atonement popularly numbered after such many facts, may all be reduced to unity under one generic fact of moral need, or under one generic law of redemptive help. In a like mode there may be a reduction, though not an equal one, of theories which ground the necessity for an atonement in the requirements of the divine

nature. In truth, the real necessity for an atonement in Christ arises in the nature of God, especially in his justice, and gives place for only two legitimate theories—two alternatively, one of which must be the true theory.

For illustration, we may apply these principles of classification and reduction to theories, popularly given as such, which are grounded simply in a need arising out of moral disabilities in us. The theories which we shall name in the illustration are in fact but different phases of the theory of Moral influence.

One theory is, that Christ died as a martyr to his prophetic mission, and for the confirmation of the lessons of moral and religious truth which he gave to the world. This is the *Marturial* theory. It assumes our ignorance and our need of higher spiritual truth, and offers us redemptive help in Christ only through the moral influence of the lessons of higher religious truth which he gave.

In another view, the death of Christ fulfilled its chief office as subservient to his resurrection, that he might thereby more fully disclose and verify the reality of a future life. Such disclosure is for the sake of its helpful religious influence in the present life. Men are strongly propense to a mere secular life. They greatly need, therefore, the practical influence of a revealed future life. Such help Christ brings through his resurrection, for which his death served as the prerequisite.

He died as an example of self-sacrificing devotion to the good of others. He so died that through the

moral force of so impressive a lesson we might be led into a life of disinterested benevolence. Man is selfish and needs such an example of self-sacrificing devotion to the good of others as Christ gives. Such are the facts which this view emphasizes. But all the redemptive help which it represents is in the practical force of a moral lesson.

In another scheme the mission and work of Christ were for the manifestation of God as among men in an incarnation; that he might "show us the Father" in his sympathy and forgiving grace. Man lacks faith, is in doubt, is in a servile fear of God, and suffers the moral paralysis of such states of mind. He needs encouragement, assurance of the kindness and love of God. This also is redemptive help only through the salutary influence of a moral lesson.

Such, indeed, are all the popularly named theories which ground the need of a mediatorial economy merely in our own moral disabilities. If any exception should be made, it is in the case of the Realistic and Mystical schemes, in which, however, the chief difference is in the mode of redemptive help. But in all that class of which we have given examples, the need, revealed in many variant facts, is yet one; and the redemptive help, coming in various forms, is operative only in one mode. Man is ignorant, and needs higher religious truth; of feeble motivity to duty, and needs its lessons in a more impressive form; of strong secular tendency, and needs the practical force of a revealed future life; selfish, and needs the helpful example of self-sacrificing love; in a servile fear of God, and needs the assurance

of his fatherly kindness. So Christ comes in all these forms of needed help. But in the deeper sense the need is one, and the redemptive help is one. And these theories, many in popular enumeration, are all one theory—the theory of Moral influence. Its claims will be considered a little further on. For the present it may be said, that no issue will be joined respecting either such need in us or such help in Christ as here alleged. But such is not the real necessity for an atonement, and such is not the true atonement.

Any further application of these principles, whereby we may test and classify the various interpretations of the redemptive mediation of Christ, will be made in connection with our review of theories.

5. *Only two Theories.*—In a strict or scientific sense, there are but two theories of atonement. We have seen how many in popular enumeration are reducible to the one theory of Moral influence. Others, as will appear in this review, are so void of essential facts that they hold no rightful place as theories. Nor is the scheme of Moral influence in any strict sense a theory of atonement, because it neither answers to the real necessity in the case nor admits an objective ground of forgiveness in the mediation of Christ.

Nor can there be more than two theories. This limitation is determined by the law of a necessary correlation between the necessity for an atonement, and the nature of the atonement as answering to that necessity. This fact we have, that the vicarious sufferings of Christ are an objective ground of the divine forgiveness. There is a necessity for such a ground;

his sufferings are an atonement only as they answer to this necessity. Hence the nature of the atonement is determined by the nature of its necessity. Now this necessity must lie either in the requirement of an absolute justice which must punish sin, or in the rectoral office of justice as an obligation to conserve the interest of moral government. There can be no other necessity for an atonement as an objective ground of forgiveness. Nor does any scheme of a real atonement in Christ either represent or imply another. Thus there is place for two theories, but only two. There is place for a theory of Absolute Substitution, according to which the redemptive sufferings of Christ were strictly penal, and the fulfillment of an absolute obligation of justice in the punishment of sin. This is the theory of Satisfaction, and answers to a necessity in the first sense given. There is also place for a theory of Conditional Substitution, according to which the redemptive sufferings of Christ were not the punishment of sin, but such a substitute for the rectoral office of penalty as renders forgiveness, on proper conditions, consistent with the requirements of moral government. This answers to a necessity in the second sense given, and accords with the deeper principles of the Governmental theory. The truth of atonement must be with the one or the other of these theories.

II.

SUMMARY REVIEW.

Most of the schemes noticed in this section we call theories only after popular usage. They are not strict-

ly such. While some have peculiar phases or elements, they are mostly based on the principles of the Moral theory. We shall attempt but a summary review of them. It will suffice to notice their leading facts, to ascertain the nature of the redemption in Christ which they represent, and to determine their place in a proper classification. A few words may be added upon their respective claims.

1. *Theory of Vicarious Repentance.*—We may so designate a scheme specially represented by Dr. John M'Leod Campbell. It is grounded in the idea of the profoundest identification of Christ with humanity in the incarnation. Therein he takes our experiences into his own consciousness; enters into the deepest sympathy with us, even in our sense of sin and of the divine displeasure. Thus he takes upon his own soul the burden and sorrow of our sins, and makes the truest, deepest confession of their demerit and of the just displeasure of God against them. Divine justice is therewith satisfied and we are forgiven. "This confession, as to its own nature, must have been a *perfect Amen in humanity to the judgment of God on the sin of man.*" "He who so responds to the divine wrath against sin, saying, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, who judgest so,' is necessarily receiving the full apprehension and realization of that wrath, as well as of that sin against which it comes into his soul and spirit, into the bosom of the divine humanity, and, so receiving it, he responds to it with a perfect response—a response from the depths of that divine humanity—and *in that perfect response he absorbs it.* For that response has

all the elements of a perfect repentance in humanity for all the sin of man; a perfect sorrow; a perfect contrition; all the elements of such a repentance, and that in absolute perfection; all, except the personal consciousness of sin; and by that perfect response in Amen to the mind of God in relation to sin is the wrath of God rightly met, and that is accorded to divine justice which is its due and could alone satisfy it.”¹

This scheme recognizes the demerit of sin and a retributive justice in God. It is a scheme of vicarious atonement, but in entire dissent from the theory of Satisfaction, as it denies even the possibility of penal substitution. It clearly holds repentance to be all that justice requires as the ground of forgiveness. In this it dissents from both the Anselmic and Grotian theories, and identifies itself with the Socinian. It admits no necessity for an objective atonement, either in an absolute penal justice or in the interest of moral government. Any necessity for redemptive help which the scheme may consistently allow, must be grounded in an inability in us to a true repentance. If a vicarious repentance is sufficient for our forgiveness, so must be a true repentance in us. This fact also classes the scheme with the Moral theory.

This special view is open to many objections. The Scriptures give it no support. It will not interpret the explicit terms of atonement, nor answer to the real necessity for one. Nor is there less difficulty in the notion of a vicarious repentance than in that of vicarious punishment. Then the logical sequence of such a

¹ Dr. Campbell: “The Nature of the Atonement,” pp. 118, 119.

vicarious repentance, with its attributed effects, is the releasement of all from the requirement of repentance, and the unconditional forgiveness of all.¹

2. *Theory of Redemption by Love.*—It is according to the Scriptures that our redemption has its original in the love of God. But this fact does not determine the nature of such redemption, nor whether it be an objective ground of forgiveness originating in the divine love, or merely the moral influence of its manifestation in Christ, operative as a subduing and reconciling power in the soul. Dr. Young is a special exponent of the latter view. There is really very little in his scheme peculiar to himself. This is specially true of its constituent facts. Any peculiarity lies rather in their combination and in the manner of their expression. The author writes with perspicuity and force. His principles are clearly given. It is easy to determine and classify his scheme.

Certain facts are postulated respecting spiritual laws. Death is the necessary consequence of sin, as life is of holiness. The only salvation, therefore, is in the destruction of sin as a subjective fact. This is the work of the redemption in Christ. "The laws of nature are owing solely to the will and fiat of the Creator. He ordained them, and had such been his pleasure they might have been altered in ten thousand ways. But the laws of the spiritual universe do not depend even on the highest will. The great God did not make them; they are eternal as he is. The great God cannot repeal them; they are immutable as he is." "Without

¹ Cave: "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," pp. 350-362.

aid from any quarter they avenge themselves, and exact, and continue without fail to exact, so long as the evil remains, the amount of penalty—visible and invisible—to the veriest jot and tittle which the deed of violation deserves.” “No term of punishment is fixed, none can be fixed. One thing, and one thing only, determines the duration of the punishment, and that is the continuance of evil in the soul. The evil continuing, its attendant penalty is a necessity, which even God could not conquer.” “There is one, but there is only one, way in which the tremendous doom of the sinful soul can be escaped, in consistency with the great laws of the spiritual universe. If sin were cast out, the death which issues solely from sin would be effectually prevented.”¹

The theory of redemption is from facts so stated. There is no need of an objective ground of forgiveness. The whole need is for a moral force working in the soul itself, and in a manner to destroy the power of subjective evil. All this is provided for in the manifestation of the divine love in the sacrifice of the cross. Such is God’s method of redemption. “By the one true sacrifice of Christ, an act of divine self-sacrifice by incarnate, crucified love, he aims a blow at the root of evil within man’s heart. . . . He breaks the hard heart by the overwhelming pressure of pure, almighty mercy, in our Lord Jesus Christ.”²

We specially object to the one-sided redemption so constructed. We fully accept the postulates respect-

¹ John Young, LL.D.: “The Life and Light of Men,” pp. 82, 85, 93, 97.

² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

ing spiritual laws as involving an absolute distinction between holiness and sin; though we do not admit the extreme view of their self-execution, which might dispense with a moral government as under an actual divine administration. God ever rules in the moral realm, and dispenses rewards to both holiness and sin. The necessity of a deliverance from sin as a subjective evil in order to salvation, we have already affirmed. Indeed, it is a very familiar truth. And that the divine love revealed in the sacrifice of the cross has a great office in our moral reformation is also a very familiar truth. It ever finds utterance in Christian exhortation and entreaty to a new spiritual life. And it is an affected or mistaken originality when men give prominence to such truths as original discoveries.

In principle the scheme is one with the theory of Moral influence. The atonement is all in a power of moral motive as embodied in manifested love, and operative only through the soul's own cognition and motivity. Like every such scheme, it utterly fails to answer to the real need of an atonement as revealed in the Scriptures and manifest in the reason of the case. It has no fair interpretation for the many Scripture texts which so directly attribute forgiveness to the redemption in the blood of Christ; nor does it give any proper recognition to the mission of the Spirit through his mediation as the efficient agency in our subjective redemption from sin.

3. *Self-propitiation in Self-sacrifice*.—We may so formulate the last theory of Dr. Bushnell. In his own account it supplements rather than supersedes his for-

mer theory: "The argument of my former treatise¹ was concerned in exhibiting the work of Christ as a reconciling power in men. This was conceived to be the whole import and effect of it. . . . I now propose to substitute for the latter half of my former treatise a different exposition; composing thus a whole of doctrine that comprises both the reconciliation of men to God and of God to men."² He still holds the position that the main office of atonement is in its moral influence with men. Now, however, he finds an element in the divine propitiation; but it is not one that identifies his scheme with either the Anselmic or Grotian atonement.

The new theory alleges a similarity of moral sentiment in God and men; and then, from an alleged requisite to a thorough human forgiveness, deduces a law of the divine forgiveness. We have retributive sentiments, disgust, and resentment against the turpitude and wrong of sin. It is admitted that these feelings have an important function in moral discipline, and that they must be treated in subservience to that end. "Filling an office so important, they must not be extirpated under any pretext of forgiveness. They require to be somehow mastered, and somehow to remain. And the supreme art of forgiveness will consist in finding how to embrace the unworthy as if they were not unworthy, or how to have them still on hand when they will not suffer the forgiveness to pass. Which supreme art is the way of propitiation—always con-

¹ "The Vicarious Sacrifice."

² Dr. Bushnell: "Forgiveness and Law," p. 33.

cerned in the reconciliation of moral natures separated by injuries.”¹

What, then, is the mode of this supreme art of reconciliation? What is the essential requisite to its realization in a free and full forgiveness? The requirement is from the nature of the hinderance to the forgiveness in our moral resentments against sin; and hence for some measure of self-propitiation which will master these resentments, and issue in a thorough forgiveness. How, then, may this self-propitiation be realized? By some manner of self-sacrifice for the good of those against whom we have such resentments. “Suffering, in short, is with all moral natures the necessary correlate of forgiveness. The man, that is, cannot say, ‘I forgive,’ and have the saying end it; he must somehow atone both himself and his enemy by a painstaking, rightly so-called, that has power to recast the terms of their relationship.”² Such is the requisite to forgiveness; some personal sacrifice for the good of the offender, and not only as a power of moral influence with him but also as a necessary self-propitiation toward him in the party offended. Such is the law of human forgiveness.

Then this same law is applied to the divine forgiveness. It is so applied on the ground of a “grand analogy, or almost identity, that subsists between our moral nature and that of God; so that our pathologies and those of God make faithful answer to each other, and he is brought so close to us that almost any thing that occurs in the workings or exigencies of our moral in-

instincts may even be expected in his.”¹ It is hence concluded that God has such hinderance to forgiveness in his moral resentments against sin as we have, and, therefore, requires the same measure of self-propitiation. He forgives just as we do. “One kind of forgiveness matches and interprets the other, for they have a common property. They come to the same point when they are genuine, and require also exactly the same preparations and conditions precedent.”² So God must propitiate himself to forgiveness in cost and suffering for our good. This he did in the sacrifice of the cross. Therein we behold “that sublime act of cost, in which God has bent himself downward, in loss and sorrow, over the hard face of sin, to say, and saying to make good, ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee.’”³

Many of these facts might be admitted without accepting the doctrine of atonement thereon constructed. The retributive sentiment is with us an original fact, and in its own nature a hinderance to forgiveness. There are resentments against injury and wrong which may strengthen the hinderance. But this law is without uniformity. The retributive feeling rarely exists alone. It is usually in association with other feelings which may either greatly hinder or greatly help any disposition to forgiveness. In a cruel, hard nature the associated feelings may co-operate with the retributive sentiment to prevent all disposition to forgiveness, and equally to prevent all acts of personal kindness which might placate the vindictive resentment; while the

¹ Dr. Bushnell: “Forgiveness and Law,” p. 35.

² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

tendencies of a generous, kindly nature may be helpful to a forgiving disposition. There are gracious, loving natures, ever ready with a full forgiveness without any self-atonement in charities to the offender going before. The more is this true as the soul is the more deeply imbued with the divine love.

Now the multiformity and contrariety of such facts in men deny to Dr. Bushnell the analogy from which he concludes the necessary means of the divine propitiation and forgiveness. Self-propitiation in a sacrificing charity to the offender is not "with all moral natures the necessary correlate of forgiveness." And with error in the premise, the conclusion is fallacious. But were it even true that this is the only law of forgiveness with men, it would not hence follow that such is the only law of forgiveness with God.

It should be distinctly noted that here we have no concern with any requirement of divine justice as maintained either in the Satisfaction theory or in the Rec-toral. Dr. Bushnell rejects both, with all that is vital in them. Nor does he admit any necessity for an atonement on the ground of either. In his scheme the necessity lies in a personal disposition of God as a resentment against the injury and wrong of sin.

It is not in the interest of our criticism upon this view to deny all hinderance in the divine resentment against sin to a propitious disposition; but we confidently affirm such a transcendent love in God as would, in the absence of all other hinderance, wait for no placation of his personal wrath in self-sacrifice, but instantly go forth to the satisfaction of its yearnings

in the freest, fullest forgiveness. If men imbued with the divine love will so forgive, much more would the infinite love. The position has the highest *a fortiori* proof. That divine love which finds its way to forgiveness through the blood of the cross, would suffer no delay by any personal resentment against sin requiring placation in costly ministries to the offender. The grace of redemption in the blood of Christ is infinitely greater than the grace of forgiveness. Hence the free gift of the former in the very state of personal resentment alleged, denies the assumed hinderance therein to the freest, fullest forgiveness.¹

This scheme, therefore, does not answer to the real necessity for the redemptive mediation of Christ. Nor does it rightly interpret the office of his sacrifice. The necessity concerns the profoundest interest of moral government, and hence arises in the very perfections of God as moral ruler, not in his personal resentment against sin. And the sacrifice of Christ answers to this necessity in atonement for sin, by rendering forgiveness consistent with the interest concerned.

Such a scheme is far deeper and grander than Dr. Bushnell's. Indeed, his is neither profound nor grand. It admits no principle or interest as concerned in forgiveness, the disregard of which would be as contrary to the divine goodness as to the divine justice. In the analogy of certain "pathologies," of personal resentment against sin, the scheme lowers God into the likeness of men; so that in him, as in them, the great hinderance to forgiveness is in these same personal resent-

¹ Rom. 5: 10; 8: 32.

ments. Thus "one kind of forgiveness matches and interprets the other, for they have a common property. They come to the same point when they are genuine, and require also the same preparations and conditions precedent." The scheme commands no lofty view of the divine goodness. Nor can it give any proper significance to the sacred proclamation of the divine love as the original of the redemptive economy. Such a love is held in no bonds of personal resentment. The scheme has no profound and glorious doctrine of divine love; and, indeed, is found on a true sounding to be shallow.

Its scientific position is easily given. As compared with the Moral theory, it has a somewhat differencing element, which carries the atonement into the reconciliation of God. But this element is insufficient to constitute a really distinct theory. Negatively, and therefore fatally, it is one with the Moral theory. It equally denies all hinderance to forgiveness in the divine justice, whether in its purely retributive function or in its rectoral office. This fact thoroughly differentiates it from both the Satisfaction and Governmental theories, and closely affiliates it with the Moral scheme.

4. *Realistic Theory*.—Closely kindred to this is the Mystical theory, next to be noticed. Each is multi-form, and the two often coalesce. These facts, with a lack of explicit and definitive statement, render it difficult either to apprehend them or to present them in a clear view.

In the Realistic theory some represent Christ as the typical or ideal man, using these terms vaguely, but

with the assumption of some manner of relationship between him and us, whereby we are the recipients of a redemptive influence working for our moral renovation and salvation. Others carry the conception of Christ into the notion of a generic humanity, of which we are individuated forms. The notion must answer somewhat to the Scholastic realism, or to the higher Augustinian anthropology, which identifies the human race in a real oneness with Adam. We may instance such a type as represented by Dr. Baird,¹ especially that by Dr. Shedd.² But all such realism is utterly groundless, and the sheerest assumption.

Nor did the incarnation bring Christ into any realistic connection with human nature which is in itself redeeming and saving. It did bring him into union with human nature, but into a thoroughly individuated form—as much so as that of any individual man. So far from such a realistic identification, he stands apart from all human nature, except the one individuated form of his incarnation. Hence that incarnation had not in itself the efficiency of redemption, but was in order to an atonement in the death of Christ, that he might come to us severally in the grace of forgiveness, and in the regenerating agency of the Holy Spirit.³ Such is the Scripture doctrine of atonement and salvation, but which no Realism represents.⁴

¹ "The Elohim Revealed," pp. 133, 428, 496, 507.

² "Discourses and Essays," pp. 259-261; "History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii, pp. 77-80.

³ Gal. 4: 4, 5; Heb. 2: 14, 15.

⁴ Dr. Rigg: "Modern Anglican Theology," pp. 130-140; Prof Crawford: "The Scripture Doctrine of Atonement," pp. 303-318.

5. *Mystical Theory*.—This theory, as previously stated, is, at least in some of its facts, closely kindred to the Realistic. It is chiefly based in the idea of a real union of Christ with the human soul. In this personal union is realized his redeeming and saving efficiency. So far the theory finds salvation in a subjective sanctification, and makes little account of justification in the forgiveness of sin. Hence it makes slight account of an objective reconciliation in the death of Christ, in comparison of his subjective work of redemption. The weighty objection to this view is, that it gives us a one-sided soteriology. It offers the benefits of an objective atonement without the atonement itself.

There is in our salvation a living union with Christ.¹ This is a truth of all evangelical theology. But in the order of nature forgiveness must precede this spiritual union. So the atonement in the blood of Christ as the only ground of forgiveness is a distinct fact from his saving union with us. Strictly, the Mystical scheme omits the atonement proper, and belongs to another part of soteriology.²

6. *Middle Theory*.—The same theory is also called the Arian—not, however, as originating with Arius, but because of an intimate association with an Arian Christology. It holds that forgiveness is granted to repenting sinners for Christ's sake, or in view of his mediatorial service. This is not a forgiveness on the ground of his death as a vicarious atonement for sin, but in re-

¹ John 15: 5, 6; Rom. 8: 10; Col. 3: 3, 4.

² Dr. Hodge: "Systematic Theology," vol. 2, pp. 581-583; Prof. Bruce: "The Humiliation of Christ," pp. 342-351.

ward of his self-sacrificing service in the interest of the human race. Higher ground is thus taken than in the Moral scheme. The mediation of Christ has a higher office than a mere practical lesson: "Not only to give us an example; not only to assure us of remission, or to procure our Lord a commission to publish the forgiveness of sin; but, moreover, to obtain that forgiveness by doing what God in his wisdom and goodness judged fit and expedient to be done in order to the forgiveness of sin; and without which he did not think it fit or expedient to grant the forgiveness of sin."¹

Yet, with all these facts, the scheme denies a proper substitutional atonement, and hence is unscriptural. It is in very thorough dissent from the theory of Satisfaction. In the maintenance of a fitness, or wise expediency, in the mediation of Christ as the reason of forgiveness, especially in its relation to the interest of moral government, it makes some approach toward the Rectoral view, but in the full exposition falls far short of it. In some features it reminds one of the theory of Anselm, though the two are far from being identical.

Dr. Hill reviews the theory in a clear analysis and statement, deriving his information of it from Dr. Thomas Balguy, Dr. Price, and others.² The treatment is with the characteristic fairness and perspicuity of the author. After a lucid statement of the scheme he notes its very serious defects, but at the same time regards it as a well-wrought and beautiful structure.³

¹ Dr. John Taylor: "Scripture Doctrine of Atonement," No. 152.

² "Lectures in Divinity," pp. 422-427.

³ Dr. Buchanan: "The Doctrine of Justification," pp. 165-168.

7. *Conditional Penal Substitution.*—We do not here appropriate any given formula of atonement, but use terms which properly designate a theory held by not a few. The view is, that the redemptive sufferings of Christ were penally endured in behalf of sinners; that as such they constitute a proper ground of forgiveness; but that the forgiveness is really conditional, as contingent upon the free action of the redeemed. There is present the idea of a necessary retribution of sin, or of a vicarious punishment in order to forgiveness. Or, if there be sin, there must also be punishment: this is the radical idea. Yet the reason of this necessity, and the relation of penal substitution to forgiveness, are not given with any exactness, as in the scheme of Satisfaction.

The penal substitution is conditional, in the sense that the forgiveness provided is contingent upon the free action of sinners respecting the required conditions. They are free to repent and believe, and equally free not to repent and believe. In the former case they are free through enabling grace; in the latter, as not subject to an irresistible power of grace. On a proper repentance and faith they are forgiven on the ground of Christ's vicarious punishment; but on the refusal of such terms they are answerable in penalty for their sins, and none the less on account of his penal substitution.

The scheme is a construction apparently between the Satisfaction and Governmental theories. It rejects the absolute substitution of the former, and adds the penal element to the proper conditional substitution of the latter.

Such, in substance, is the theory of all who hold both

the penal quality of the redemptive sufferings of Christ and a real conditionality of forgiveness. Hence, we were entirely correct in representing it as the theory of not a few. Many leading Arminians may be classed in such a scheme; though we think it for them an unscientific position. Arminius himself maintained both penal substitution and a real conditionality of forgiveness.¹ Grotius held both, though with far less explicitness respecting the former. Some of Richard Watson's statements would assign to him the same position. It is the theory maintained in the more recent and very able work of Marshall Randles.²

Is there room for such a scheme? There is a broad ground of distinction between the Satisfaction and Governmental theories. But such a difference is not always room for another. Two theories may so appropriate all possible facts and principles of the question, that the truth in the case must be with one or the other. Such are the facts respecting these two theories of atonement. Nor can a penal substitution be conditional.

Penalty, as an instrument of justice, has only two offices: one in the punishment of sin as such, the other, in the interest of the government. And though punishment is only for the sake of its rectoral end, it is none the less strictly retributive, or inflicted only on the ground of demerit. There is no other just punishment. Nor could any other fulfill its rectoral office. Then if the punishment be inflicted upon a substitute, the sub-

¹ Writings, (Nichols'), vols. i, pp. 28, 29; ii, pp. 496-499.

² "Substitution: Atonement."

stitution must, in the nature of the case, be real and absolute. Justice can have no further retributive claim against the sinners so substituted; not any more than if they had suffered in themselves the full punishment of their sins. Here the consistency of the case is with the doctrine of Satisfaction. All so replaced by a substitute in punishment must be discharged from personal amenability to penalty. Hence a real conditionality of forgiveness has no consistency with penal substitution.

We are fully aware that rigid Satisfactionists assert the conditionality of forgiveness. This, however, does not void the intrinsic inconsistency in the case. Nor is what they assert a real conditionality; certainly not such as Arminianism ever maintains. For instance, faith is with them the condition of forgiveness; but they really deny the contingency of faith. In their scheme, it is conditional only as precedent to forgiveness in a necessary order of facts in the process of salvation. It takes its place as a purchased benefit of redemption in the process of salvation monergistically wrought. Irresistible grace is efficient cause to the faith, as to every fact in the actual salvation. Christ would be wronged of his purchase were it not so wrought in every redeemed soul. Here, indeed, is the real consistency with Satisfactionists. But with all who hold a conditional penal substitution, especially with all Arminians, forgiveness has a real conditionality. Here, indeed, is a main issue between Calvinism and Arminianism in an unended polemics of centuries. It is the historic issue of monergism and synergism. The latter, with its full meaning of conditionality in forgiveness and salvation,

is ever the unyielding and unwavering position of Arminianism.

The question recurs respecting the consistency of such a conditionality with penal substitution; or whether there can be a conditional penal substitution. Nothing is gained by asserting simply the penal character of Christ's redemptive sufferings, with the omission of their strictly substitutive office. In such a view it would be impossible to show any just ground or proper end of the punishment. Sin is the only ground of just and wise punishment. Penal substitution must never depart from this principle. If Christ suffered punishment, our sin must have been the ground of his punishment. And our sin must have suffered merited punishment in him. This, and only this, would answer to the idea of a necessity for punishment in the case of sin—a necessity arising in the relation of sin to a purely retributive justice. There could be no pretense, even, to such a punishment, except as our sins were imputed to Christ, and so made punishable in him. But in such a case the penal substitution is real and absolute: sin suffers its merited punishment: absolute justice receives its full retributive claim. No further penalty can fall either upon Christ or upon the sinners replaced in his penal substitution; and no more upon them than upon him. Their discharge is a requirement of justice itself. Hence there cannot be a conditional penal substitution.

8. *Three Leading Theories.*—We here name together the Moral, Satisfaction, and Governmental theories as the three leading ones. But we name them simply

with a view to the indication of their general character as prefatory to their more formal discussion.

It is important that formulas of doctrine should consist of thoroughly definitive terms. This is not always an easy attainment. There is no such attainment in these formulas of atonement. Neither gives what is cardinal in the theory which it represents, nor clearly discriminates it from the others; and it is only in their discussion that we shall ascertain their respective principles and distinctive facts. Their general sense may be very briefly given.

The Moral theory regards the redemptive work of Christ as accomplished through his example and lessons of religious truth, operative as a practical influence with men. It is the narrowest and most exclusive of the deeper truths of soteriology.

The theory of Satisfaction makes fundamental the satisfaction of an absolute retributive justice by the punishment of sin in Christ as the substitute of sinners in penalty. It admits the offices of atonement represented by the other two theories, but as incidental.

The Governmental theory gives chief prominence to the office of justice in the interest of moral government, yet holds to a proper sense of satisfaction, and gives full place to the principle of moral influence, not, however, as a constituent fact of atonement, but as a practical result of the redemptive economy.¹

¹ Rev. Daniel T. Fisk, D.D.: "The Necessity of the Atonement," "Bibliotheca Sacra," April, 1861. The article of Dr. Fisk presents these three theories in a very clear view. It maintains the Governmental theory.

CHAPTER VI.

THEORY OF MORAL INFLUENCE.

THIS theory has already come into view, and more than once. It is one of the three which we propose to treat more fully than those previously noticed. We do not concede to it a scientific position. Strictly, it is not a theory of atonement ; yet it is such in popular enumeration and usage, and one of no little prominence. It will, however, require no great elaboration, as we already have its principles; and especially as the theory is one of great simplicity and clearness. With all its phases, its fundamental principle is ever one, and easily apprehended.

I.

FACTS OF THE THEORY.

1. *The Redemptive Law.*—The mediation of Christ fulfills its redemptive office in the economy of human salvation through the influence of its own lessons and motives, as practically operative upon the soul and life of men. Such is the office of his incarnation, if admitted; of his example, teachings, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension. By the lessons of truth so given and enforced it is sought to enlighten men ; to address to them higher motives to a good life ; to awaken love in grateful response to the consecration of so worthy a life to their good ; to lead them to repent-

ance and piety through the moral force of such a manifestation of the love of God; to furnish them a perfect example in the life of Christ, and through his personal influence to transform them into his likeness.¹

Advocates may vary the summary of facts, as they may differ respecting the Christ, but the result is simply to lessen or increase the possible moral force without any change of principle. The law of redemptive help is ever one, whether Christ be essentially divine or only human. With his divinity and incarnation the synthesis of facts may embody the larger force of religious motive; but this is all the advantage from the higher Christology. Such is the moral theory of redemption. Dr. Bushnell calls it "the moral power view;" but such a formula neither alters the redemptive law nor adds to its saving efficiency. The only advantage is in a little more force of expression.

2. *Socinian*.—Historically, the theory synchronizes with Socinus, deceased 1604, and, in the stricter sense, originated with him. Hence it may properly be called Socinian. Abelard, following soon after Anselm, propounded similar views, which were favored somewhat by Peter Lombard and others, but gave no exact construction to a new theory in opposition to the more prevalent Church doctrine. He exerted but a transient disturbing influence upon this great question, and left the Anselmic doctrine in its chief position.²

¹ Prof. Bruce: "The Humiliation of Christ," pp. 326-328.

Dr. Shedd: "History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii, pp. 286-288; Dr. Cunningham: "Historical Theology," vol. ii, pp. 294-301; Dr. Hill: "Lectures in Divinity," pp. 414-422.

With Socinus the Moral theory sprung naturally from his system of theology, especially from his Christology. In the assertion of Christ's simple humanity, doctrinal consistency required him to reject all schemes of a real objective atonement, and to interpret the mediation of Christ in accord with his own Christology. The Moral theory is the proper result. It is the scheme which his system of theology required, and the only one which it will consistently admit. Affiliated forms of Christianity—such as Unitarianism and Universalism—naturally and consistently adopt the same theory. It has a natural affinity with all forms of Rationalistic Christianity.

3. *Its Dialectics.*—The Moral scheme, arising in a system of theology so diverse from the Orthodox faith, and so antagonistic itself to the Orthodox atonement, was inevitably polemic, and both defensively and offensively, in its methods. This naturally arose, in the first part, from the fact that the Scriptures, in what seems their obvious sense, positively affirm an objective atonement in Christ; and in the second part, from the fact that the doctrine of atonement then most prevalent was open to serious valid objections, and especially to very plausible ones.

But little attempt was made to build up the new doctrine on direct Scripture proofs. The main attempt was to set aside the Scripture proofs alleged in support of the Church doctrine. In this endeavor the new exegesis had little regard for well-established laws of hermeneutics. It dealt freely in captious criticism, and in the most gratuitous and forced interpretation. The

exigency of the case required such a method. Scripture facts and utterances are so clear and emphatic in the affirmation of an objective atonement in the mediation of Christ as the only and necessary ground of forgiveness, that the new scheme found in such a method its only possible defense against their crushing force. We have no occasion to follow the scheme in all this exegesis. The truth of an atonement has no such exigency; and the round of following would be a long and weary one: for the whole issue concerns other great questions of doctrine, especially of anthropology and Christology, as well as the direct question of atonement. These great truths are vitally related to each other.

Within the sphere of reason the new scheme was boldly offensive in its method. Here it had more apparent strength, and could be plausible even when not really potent. But any real strength bore rather against a particular form of redemptive doctrine than against the truth itself. The array of objections, wrought in all the vigor of rhetoric and passion, is nugatory against the true doctrine—as will appear in our treatment of objections. Nor are we answerable in the case of such as are valid against a doctrine which we do not accept, although brought from a theological stand-point which we utterly reject. The scheme of Satisfaction, as constructed in the Reformed theology, and now held as the more common Calvinistic view, is open to such objection. And an objection is none the less valid because made in the interest of a scheme much further from the truth than the one against which it is alleged.

Beyond the ground of valid objection to the doctrine of Satisfaction, Socinianism finds a sphere of plausible objection to the atonement itself. A fluency of words, even with little wealth or potency of thought, will easily declaim against its unreason, its injustice, its aspersion of the divine goodness, its implication of vindictiveness in God, its subversion of moral distinctions and obligations. Very gifted minds have given to such declamation all possible force. It has the force of plausibility on false assumptions and issues, but is impotent in the light of truth. This will appear in our treatment of objections to the atonement.

4. *Truth of Moral Influence.*—The real issue with the Socinian scheme does not concern the truth of a helpful moral influence in the economy of redemption. This any true doctrine of atonement must fully hold. The issue is against making such influence the only form and the sum of redemptive help; indeed, against making it a constituent fact of the atonement as such.

The moral influence of the mediation of Christ is from its own nature and facts, and not a part or fact of the atonement itself. If, in the case of a rebellion, a son of the sovereign should, at a great sacrifice, interpose in such provisional measures as would render forgiveness on proper submission consistent with the interest of the sovereignty; if the sovereign should be concurring with the son in such provision; and if such grace on the part of both the sovereign and the son should be successfully pleaded with those in rebellion as a reason for submission and loyalty, it would surely be unreason to maintain that such moral influence was

the whole atonement in the case. It would be unreasonable to maintain that it was any part of it. It would be equally so with the submission so induced as a necessary condition of forgiveness. The moral influence in the case presupposes the atonement, and arises out of the grace of its provisions. Without such grace there can be no appeals of moral potency. The very pleas which give persuasive force to the pleading are facts of grace in an atonement previously made. Hence the practical force or moral influence of a provision of forgiveness cannot be that provision itself, nor any part of it.

Such are the facts respecting the atonement in Christ. Its power of moral influence lies in the infinite truth and grace revealed in its provisions. The Son of God, as the gift of the Father, died in atonement for our sins, that we might be forgiven and saved. Here is the plea of moral potency. But there can be no such plea, and, therefore, no such moral influence, without the previous fact of such an atonement. Hence the unreason of accounting the practical lesson, or moral influence of an atonement, the atonement itself, or any constituent part of it.

Thus the question of a helpful practical lesson in the economy of redemption is not one respecting its reality, but one respecting its place. The doctrine of a real atonement for sin gives the fullest recognition to such a moral influence, and represents its greatest possible force. Indeed, such an influence is the very life and power of all evangelistic work. And the real moral power of the cross is with the Churches to which it is a

real atonement for sin. Through all the Christian centuries such an atonement has been the persuasive power of the Gospel. It is the living impulsion of all the great evangelistic enterprises of to-day. And, as the history of the past throws its light upon the future, the persuasive power of the Gospel in winning the coming generations to Christ must be in the moral pathos of a real atonement in his blood.

Such a doctrine of atonement embodies a power of persuasion infinitely greater than is possible to any scheme of redemptive help grounded in a Socinian Christology. In the one case, we have a divine Mediator; in the other, a human mediator: in the one, a real atonement for sin; in the other, no atonement for sin. In the former, the divinity of Christ, his divine Sonship, his incarnation, the profoundness of his humiliation, the depth of his suffering and shame of his cross—all go into the atonement, and combine in a revelation of the divine holiness and love which embodies the highest potency of moral influence. And we are pleased to quote and adopt a very forceful expression of the marvelous moral power of the cross from one who himself denied an objective atonement for sin in the death of Christ, but was able to give such expression, because he accepted all the divine verities respecting Christ upon which a true doctrine is constructed:—

“This is the unscrutable mystery of incarnate love! the hidden spring of that moral power over the human heart, which, in myriads of instances, has proved irresistible. On the one hand, God in Christ—in Christ in his life, in Christ on the cross—is reconciling men to

himself, and employing his mightiest instrument for recovering, gaining back, redeeming the world. On the other hand, Christ—Christ in his life, Christ on the cross—is God impersonated, so far as a human medium and method of impersonation could reach. Christ is the nature of God, brought near and unveiled to human eyes. Christ is the heart of God laid open, that men might almost hear the beat of its unutterable throbbings, might almost feel the rush of its mighty pulsations. The Incarnate in his life and in his death, in his words and in his deeds, in his whole character, and spirit, and work on earth, was ever unveiling the Father, and making a path for the Father into the human soul. But on the cross Christ presses into the very center of the world's heart, takes possession of it, and there, in that center, preaches, as nowhere else was possible, the gospel of God's love!"¹

II.

ITS REFUTATION.

No elaborate polemics is required here. We already have the facts for the refutation of this theory. These facts are of two classes: one respecting the reality of an atonement in Christ, as the objective ground of forgiveness and salvation; the other, respecting the necessity for such an atonement. The former we have verified by the Scriptures; the latter, by both the Scriptures and the reason of the case. The theory of Moral influence, denying, as it does, the divine relation and office of atonement as the ground of forgiveness,

¹ Dr. Young: "The Life and Light of Men," pp. 40, 41.

and limiting the saving work of Christ to the office of a practical lesson of piety, has a most thorough refutation in these facts. We refer to them as previously given.¹

This reference might here suffice; yet it is proper to bring this theory face to face with the facts and truths whereby it has its refutation. But we do not need a formal array of all as previously maintained. Nor need they be presented just in the order then observed. The theory is disproved—

1. *By the Fact of an Atonement.*—The fact of an objective atonement in Christ is dependent upon the Scriptures for its revelation and proof. Even the conception of a scheme so stupendous in its character never could originate in any finite mind. The idea includes not only the fact of a vicarious sacrifice of Christ in our redemption, but also the vitally related truths of his divinity and incarnation. It includes, also, by necessary implication, the very truth of the divine trinity, and of the unity of personality in Christ as the God-man. Such truths are from above, as the redeeming Lord is, and spoken only from heaven. And as the Redeemer himself can be known only by revelation, so the full purpose of his mission in the incarnation, and the nature of his redeeming work, can be known only by revelation. But the great truths so given, and taking their place in vital relation to the saving work of Christ—truths of his divinity, incarnation, personality, as the God-man—clearly reveal an infinitely profounder purpose in his suffering and death than is fulfilled in the office of a moral lesson. And Socinianism, in all its

¹ Chapters ii, iii.

phases, consistently rejects these divine truths in a system of theology which maintains the Moral theory of atonement. But their rejection is not their disproof. And their truth, as given in all the clearness and authority of revelation, is conclusive against this theory.

Then we have the fact of an atonement, not only as the logical implication of great truths so vitally connected with it, but also in such facts and terms of Scripture as clearly contain and directly assert it.

We have the Gospel as a message of forgiveness and salvation. Such blessings are proclaimed in Christ, and in him only. They are specially offered through his sufferings and death. Here is the fact of an atonement.

In the more specific terms, Christ, in his sufferings and death, in his very blood, is our reconciliation, our propitiation, our redemption. He is such for us as sinners, and as the ground of our forgiveness. These are vital facts in the economy of redemption, and the very source of its practical lesson. And how one-sided!—indeed, how no-sided!—the scheme which accounts the lesson all, and rejects the atonement out of which it arises! The theory of Moral influence renders no satisfactory account of these terms. It is powerless for their consistent interpretation. It is, therefore, a false theory. No doctrine of atonement can be true which will not fairly interpret the terms of Scripture in which it is expressed.

In other terms, Christ is set forth in his death as a sacrifice for sin, and one to be interpreted in the light of the typical sacrifices appertaining to earlier economies

of religion; in his high-priestly office offering up himself as a sacrifice for sin; in his high-priestly office in heaven, into which he enters with his own blood, making intercession for us. These are facts of a real atonement in Christ, and conclusive against the Moral theory.

2. *By its Necessity.*—The necessity of an atonement in the blood of Christ as the ground of forgiveness is a truth of the Scriptures. Thus it behooved Christ to suffer and die, that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name.¹ There is salvation in no other.² If righteousness, or forgiveness, were by the law, Christ is dead in vain.³ If righteousness, or forgiveness, were possible by any law given, then life would be by the law.⁴ The same necessity for an atonement in Christ is affirmed by the requirement and necessity of faith in him as the condition of salvation. What will the Moral scheme do with such facts? How will it interpret such texts? It has no power fairly to dispose of them, or to interpret them consistently with its own principles. It has, therefore, no claim to recognition as a true theory of atonement.

And how will the Moral scheme answer for the necessity of an atonement as manifest in the very reason of the case? This necessity concerns the profoundest interests of moral government. They require the conservation of law. Such law requires the enforcing sanction of penalty. Hence its remission imperatively requires some provisional substitute which shall fulfill its rectoral function. The Moral scheme offers no such substitute. It must ignore the most patent facts of the

¹ Luke 24: 46, 47. ² Acts 4: 12. ³ Gal. 2: 21. ⁴ Gal. 3: 21.

case. It must deny the leading truths of anthropology, as clearly given in both sacred and secular history. It must attribute to forgiveness a facility and indifference consistent, somewhat, with mere personal relations, but utterly inconsistent with the interests of government; most of all, with the requirements of the divine moral government. The Moral scheme, therefore, gives no answer to the real necessity for an atonement. Yet such an answer is an imperative requirement. The scheme must be rejected. The necessity for an atonement is its refutation.

3. *By the Peculiar Saving Work of Christ.* — The theory of Moral influence, by its deepest principles, and by its very content and limitation, implies and maintains that Christ is a Saviour in no other mode than any good man is, or may be. The good man who, by his example, religious instruction, and personal influence, leads a sinner to repentance and a good life, saves him as really and fully as Christ saves any sinner, and in the very same mode. The law of salvation is identical in the two cases. The mode of redemptive help is one; the saving force one. And the sole difference between Christ and any good man in saving sinners is, in the measure of religious influence which they respectively exert. Many special facts respecting Christ may be freely admitted. To him may be conceded a special divine commission, a superior character, higher spiritual endowment, greater gifts of religious instruction, a life of matchless graces, deeds, and sacrifices; and that all combine in a potency of unequaled practical force. Still, he is a Saviour in no peculiar mode,

but only through a higher moral influence. This is the sum of his distinction. All his saving work is through a helpful religious lesson. So any good man may save sinners. And so many a good man does save many sinners.

But is this all? Is there no other distinction in favor of Christ than that of a higher moral influence practically operative upon men? Is this all that the typical services mean? all that the promises and prophecies of a coming Messiah signify? all the meaning of the angels in the joyful announcement of the blessed Advent? all that Christ meant in the deeper utterances of his saving work? all that the apostles have written in the gospels and epistles? all that they accepted in faith and heralded in preaching? all that the faith of the living Church rightfully embraces? all the hope of a consciously sinful and helpless humanity leaning upon Christ for help? all the meaning and joy of the saints in the presence of the Lamb slain, as there in grateful love and gladsome song they ascribe their salvation to his blood? No, no; this is not all. There is infinitely more in the saving work of Christ. He saves us in a unique mode—one in which no other does or can; saves us through an atonement in his blood.¹ By this fact is the Moral scheme refuted.

4. *Not a Theory of Atonement.*—There is here no issue. The facts which we have in the refutation of this theory deny to it all rightful position as a theory of atonement. It will neither interpret the Scriptures which reveal the atonement, nor answer to the real ne-

¹ Chapter ii, I, 7.

cessity for one. It will not admit any proper definition of an atonement. It is in fact set forth and maintained in the denial of one. So, by the decision of all vitally related facts, and by the position of its advocates, the Moral scheme is not a theory of atonement.

CHAPTER VII.

THEORY OF SATISFACTION.

A CAREFUL discrimination of leading theories on any great question of theology is helpful to its clearer apprehension, and to more definite doctrinal views. But such discrimination requires a careful study of the theories severally. We propose, therefore, to give special attention to the theory of Satisfaction; and the more, as the real issue respecting the nature of the atonement is between it and the Governmental theory, rightly constructed.

I.

PREFATORY.

1. *Position in Theology.*—The theory of Satisfaction holds a prominent place in systematic theology. Its advocates freely call it the Catholic doctrine. The history of doctrines certainly records a very large dissent. Yet as the doctrine of the Calvinistic system, its prominence must be conceded. But even here it is only the leading view. Many Calvinists dissent; and the number is growing. It is difficult, in the face of Scripture and an infinite redeeming love, to maintain the position of a limited atonement; with many, impossible. But this once surrendered and a general one maintained, consistency requires another doctrine of atonement. Here is one law of a large and growing dissent of Calvinists from the doctrine of Satisfaction.

2. *Formation.*—The doctrine is not from the beginning. With others, it has its place in the history of doctrinal construction. Nor did it reach completeness at once. It went through a long discussion, and appeared in different phases. The principle of penal substitution was settled first, though the exact nature of it is scarcely settled yet. But this was found to be in sufficient for the Reformed system. An absolute personal election to eternal life requires a “finished salvation” in Christ. And the necessity for a substitute in penalty is easily interpreted to imply the necessity for a substitute in obedience. The law is no more absolute in the demand of punishment than in the requirement of obedience. Any principles which will admit substitution in the former will equally admit it in the latter. And in this system Christ must take the place of the elect under the law in both facts. He must answer for their sin in a vicarious punishment, and for their duty of personal righteousness in a vicarious obedience.

Thus the doctrine of Satisfaction found its place and full expression in the “Federal Theology,” the logical outcome of the Reformed system. “Christ’s atonement was thus the fulfillment of the federal conditions. The Father, who in every part of this great transaction was at once the Lawgiver and the Fountain of the covenant, insisted on the full performance of the law, and yet provided the surety, who was made under the law in the proper sense of the term. It was a true command on God’s side, and a true obedience on Christ’s side. He stood in our covenant, which was the law

of works; that is, the law in its precepts and in its curse.”¹

The atonement of Satisfaction is often called the Anselmic, and is traced to the scheme of Anselm as its original. We have previously noted the insufficiency of his scheme as a scientific basis for this doctrine; and we have a more rational account of its genesis and growth as the logical requirement and product of the Calvinistic system.

3. *Two Vicarious Factors*.—Thus in the completed doctrine there are two elements or factors—substituted punishment and substituted obedience. Nothing less, it is claimed, will satisfy the absolute requirement of justice and law. Sin must be punished; but its punishment neither supersedes nor satisfies the requirement of perfect obedience. The elect have failed in this obedience, and never can fulfill its obligation by their own personal conduct. Hence they need a substitute in obedience as much as in penalty. Christ answers for them in both.

Such is the atonement of Satisfaction. Christ takes the place of the elect in both penalty and precept, and, as their substitute, endures the punishment which, on account of sin, they deserve, and in his obedience fulfills the righteousness required of them. Thus justice and law are satisfied.² The vicarious punishment discharges the elect from amenability to penalty on ac-

Prof. Smeaton: “The Apostles’ Doctrine of Atonement,” p. 540.

² Dr. Buchanan: “The Doctrine of Justification,” p. 308; Dr. A. A. Hodge: “The Atonement,” chap. xviii; Dr. Shedd: “The History of Christian Doctrine,” vol. ii, p. 341.

count of sin, and his vicarious obedience renders them deservedly rewardable with the eternal blessedness to which they are predestinated. "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father had given unto him."¹

4. *Concerned with Penal Substitution.*—In the review of this theory we shall limit the treatment to the one element of satisfaction by penal substitution. The other element properly belongs to the question of justification. It really belongs to this question in the Calvinistic scheme; only, here the vicarious obedience of Christ is a constituent fact of the atonement itself. It answers to an absolute requirement of the divine law as really as his substituted punishment, and, by imputation to the elect, constitutes in them the ground of a strictly forensic justification. This is a justification by works, not in forgiveness. "If Christ fulfilled the law for us, and presents his righteousness to its demands as the basis of our justification, then are we justified by the deeds of the law, no less than if it were our own personal obedience and righteousness by which we are justified."² But in any view of the question, satisfaction by obedience respects a different claim and office of justice from satisfaction by punishment. And what-

¹ Westminster Confession, chap. viii, v.

² Dr. Curry: "Justification by Faith;" Methodist Quarterly Review, January, 1845, p. 22.

ever reason Satisfactionists may have, as arising from their own scheme of soteriology, for the inclusion of both elements in the treatment of atonement, we have no reason for the same method in our review. In this restricted treatment we have the precedence of a master in the soteriology of Satisfaction: "By the way, observe I speak only of the penalty of the law, and the passive righteousness of Christ, strictly so called. . . . What place that active righteousness of Christ hath, or what is its use in our justification, I do not now inquire, being unwilling to inmix myself unnecessarily in any controversy." ¹

II.

ELEMENTS OF THE THEORY.

Most of the elements of this scheme have already appeared; yet it is proper that they here be stated distinctly and in order.

1. *Satisfaction in Punishment.*—The satisfaction of justice in its punitive demand is a cardinal fact of the theory. Indeed, it is so essential, that such satisfaction must enter into the very nature of the atonement. Both a moral influence with men and an important rectoral office are admitted, but only as incidental. Not even the latter is essential; nor has it any place in the foundation of the scheme. But the satisfaction of divine justice in the definite sense of the doctrine—satisfaction in the punishment of sin according to its demerit, and solely for that reason, is essential. It is not omitted in the case of the redeemed and saved, nor can it be. The atonement is in a mode to render the satisfac-

¹ Owen: "Works," (Goold's,) vol. x, p. 442.

tion required. Indeed, such satisfaction is the atonement as it respects the claim of retributive justice against the demerit of sin.

2. *By a Substitute in Penalty.*—In this doctrine the satisfaction is by substitutional punishment. The absolute necessity for the satisfaction renders this the only possible mode of redemption. Hence, it is maintained, Christ takes the law-place of elect sinners, and suffers in their stead the penalty due to their sins, or such a penalty as satisfies the punitive demand of justice against them.

3. *Three Senses of the Substitution.*—On the nature of the penal substitution, or in what sense Christ suffered the penalty of sin, advocates of the doctrine have not been of one mind. Indeed, it has been with them a question of diverse views, and of no little controversy. The history of the question gives us three forms of opinion.

i. *In Identical Penalty.*—This view has such palpable difficulties, that of course the thinkers of a great Christian communion could not agree in it. Yet it has its place in the history of Calvinistic soteriology; and, though now generally discarded, it is still thought worthy of the attention and adverse criticism of the Calvinistic authors holding a different view. In the time of its currency great divines were among its representatives; for instance, John Owen.¹ And he had a fol-

¹ "That which I maintain as to this point in difference I have also made apparent. It is wholly comprised under these two heads—first, Christ suffered the same penalty which was in the obligation; secondly, to do so is to make payment *ejusdem*, and not *tantidem*."—*Works*, (Goold's,) vol. x, p. 448.

lowing; and such, that it is common to speak of his school.

It is needless to array the many difficulties of such a view. An identical punishment by substitution is in any case psychologically impossible. What, then, must be the fact with such a substitute as Christ? Punishment is suffered in the consciousness of the subject. Its nature, therefore, must be largely determined by his own personal character in relation to sin and penalty. It is hence impossible that Christ should suffer in substitution as the actual sinner deserves to suffer, and would suffer, in his own punishment. Nor can such a principle render any explanation of the difference between the redemptive sufferings of Christ as only temporary, and the merited punishment of sinners, as eternal. Words are easily uttered. Therefore it is easy to attempt a solution of the difficulty by saying that the sufferings of Christ fulfilled the legal requirement of eternal punishment, because, while temporal in fact, they were *potentially* or *intensively* eternal. But such terms have no meaning in such a use.

ii. In Equal Penalty.—Christ endured penal sufferings equal in amount to the merited penal sufferings of all the sinners redeemed. This view, also, has its place in historic Calvinism, and a broader one than that of identical penalty. It is now generally discarded. Yet its present disrepute is not properly from any fundamental principle. If possible and necessary, it would be permissible, on the very principle of penal substitution. It is rejected as impossible, or certainly not actual, because rendered unnecessary to a sufficient

atonement by the superior rank of Christ as substitute in penalty. Strange that it ever should have found favor or friend. It needs no refutation. And all friends of great doctrinal truth should be glad that now it is generally discarded.

iii. In Equivalent Penalty.—The sense is, that the penal sufferings of Christ, while far less in quantity than the merited penal sufferings of the sinners redeemed, were yet, in quantity and quality combined, of equal value for the satisfaction of justice, and, therefore, an equivalent substitute in the case. The higher supplementary quality is derived from the superior rank of Christ as substitute in penalty. It is as the payment of gold in the place of silver. The claim is satisfied with a reduction of quantity in proportion to the higher quality of the substitute.¹ This is now the common form of penal substitution as held in the doctrine of Satisfaction. But justice must have penal satisfaction, either in the full punishment of the actual offender or in an equivalent punishment of his substitute.

4. *Absolute Substitution.*—Atonement by substitution is not a distinctive fact of the theory of Satisfaction. The Rectoral theory holds the same fact fully and firmly. Nor is an atonement by penal substitution a distinctive fact of that doctrine. Many hold such a penal substitution as, in their view, constitutes a really conditional ground of forgiveness.² In this scheme the redemptive sufferings of Christ were, in some sense not exactly defined, the punishment of sin; but not such a

¹ Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," pp. 300, 301.

² Chap. v, II, 7.

punishment that the redeemed sinner must in very justice be discharged. We have previously stated the inconsistency of the position. Penal substitution and a real conditionality of forgiveness must refuse scientific fellowship. We accept, therefore, the view of Dr. A. A. Hodge, that it is "by a happy sacrifice of logic" that Arminius himself, and some of his leading followers, are with the Calvinists on penal substitution;¹ only, we reject the epithet qualifying the sacrifice. We do not think it a *happy* sacrifice of logic on the part of an Arminian, whereby he mistakes the true nature of the atonement, and at the same time admits a principle which requires him, in consistency, to accept along with it the purely distinctive doctrines of Calvinism. But whatever the sacrifice of logic in the case, the fact of such a theory remains the same. And this fact denies to the doctrine of Satisfaction the distinctive fact of penal substitution.

It hence follows that the distinctive fact of the Satisfaction theory is an absolute penal substitution; absolute in the sense of a real and sufficient punishment of sin in Christ as substitute in penalty; and also in the sense of an unconditional discharge of all for whom he is such a substitute. Such a discharge follows necessarily from the very nature of the substitution alleged, and in the averment of the very masters in the soteriology of Satisfaction. This will appear in its place.

¹ "The Atonement," p. 14.

III.

JUSTICE AND ATONEMENT.

1. *Their Relation.*—Were there no justice, there could be no sin in any strict forensic sense. There could be neither guilt nor punishment. The judicial treatment of sin is from its relation to justice and law. It can neither be judicially condemned nor forgiven, except in such relation. Hence, as the atonement is the ground of the divine forgiveness, there must be a most intimate relation between it and justice. And for a true doctrine of atonement, we require a true doctrine of justice.

It follows, that in any scientific treatment, the theory of atonement must accord with the doctrine of justice upon which it is constructed. The atonement of Satisfaction is exceptionally rigid in its conformity to this law. The same law is observed in the Rectoral atonement; yet here its relation to justice has not been as fully and exactly treated as it should be, and as it must be in order to a right construction and exposition of the doctrine. These facts require some specific statements respecting justice which may be appropriate here, though the fuller treatment will be in connection with the principles specially concerned in the question, as we find them in the Satisfaction and Rectoral theories.

2. *Distinctions of Justice.*—Technically, justice is in several kinds; but, strictly, such distinctions are from its different relations and offices rather than intrinsic to itself.

i. Commutative.—Justice, in this distinction, has a commercial sense, and is specially concerned with business transactions. The rendering or requiring an exact due or equivalent, and whether in money or other commodity, is commutative justice. It has no admitted place in the atonement, except in the now generally discarded sense of identical or equal penalty. Whether that of equivalent penalty is logically clear of the principle, we may yet inquire.

ii. Distributive.—This is justice in a moral and forensic sense. It regards men as under moral obligation and law; as obedient or disobedient; as morally good or evil in their personal character; and is the rendering to them reward or punishment according to their personal conduct. Some divide it into premial and punitive; but the sense is not thereby changed.

iii. Public.—Public justice, in its relation to moral government, is not a distinct kind, but simply divine justice in moral administration. It is really one with distributive justice, properly interpreted. We do not accept the interpretation of Satisfactionists. On the other hand, advocates of the Rectoral atonement have unduly lowered the truth of public justice. On a right exposition of each, the two are one. But we shall find a more appropriate place for the treatment of public justice when discussing the Governmental atonement.¹

3. *Punitive Justice and Satisfaction.*—Punitive justice is justice in the punishment of sin, or the office

¹ Dr. Wardlaw: "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, pp. 368-372; Owen: "A Dissertation on Divine Justice," part i, Works, (Goold's.) vol. x.

of which is to punish it. And punitive, as a qualifying term, best expresses that principle of justice which the theory under review claims to have been satisfied by the penal substitution of Christ.

Remunerative justice has respect to obedience and its reward. The law, as its expression, requires perfect obedience as the ground of the reward. And, on the theory of Satisfaction, Christ by his personal obedience meritoriously fulfilled the law in behalf of the elect. But his righteousness so represented as an element of atonement in the satisfaction of justice, respects an essentially different principle from that concerned in his penal substitution, and, as before noted, has no proper place in the present discussion.

Then the essential fact of punitive justice is, that it punishes sin according to its demerit, and on that ground; and must none the less so punish it in the total absence of every other reason or end. Such is the justice which the theory under review claims to have been satisfied by the penal substitution of Christ.

IV.

PRINCIPLES OF THE THEORY.

The theory of Satisfaction necessarily posits certain principles as underlying the doctrine of atonement which it maintains. They must constitute the very basis of the doctrine. Yet they require but a brief statement here, as their fuller treatment will be in connection with a critical testing of the theory.

1. *The Demerit of Sin.*—Sin has intrinsic demerit. It deserves the retribution of divine justice on account

of its intrinsic evil, and entirely irrespective of all salutary results of its punishment.

We accept this principle, and in the fullest persuasion of its truth. Nor have we any theory to construct upon its denial. It is a truth in fullest accord with the Holy Scriptures. Their announced penalties represent this demerit. Such penalties have no other ground in justice. And our moral consciousness, especially under divine enlightenment and quickening, responds to the voice of Scripture. But the punitive demerit of sin, so given and affirmed, is in no discord with our own doctrine of atonement.

2. *A Divine Punitive Justice.*—There is a punitive justice in God. And it is a fact of his very nature, as specific and real as any other fact. It is no mere phase of his benevolence, nor reaction of his pity, simply, for one wronged, against the author of his wrong. God, in his very justice, condemns sin as such. Nor is such condemnation a mere judgment of the discordance of sin with his own uttered precepts, or with some ideal or impersonal law, or with the welfare of others, but the profoundest emotional reprobation of it because of its inherent evil.

So we maintain. Hence we reject the view of Leibnitz, and of all agreeing with him, "that justice is a modification of benevolence ;"¹ a view that has received too much favor from advocates of the Rectoral atonement. Whether the love of God is his supreme law in moral administration is really another question, and one not negated by the truth of his justice. But

¹ Gilbert: "The Christian Atonement," p. 185.

our own moral nature, as divinely constituted, joins with the Holy Scriptures in attesting the truth of such a divine justice. Our moral reason distinguishes between the turpitude of a sinful deed and the injury which it may inflict. A like injury, innocently done, awakens no such reprobation. We reprobate the intention of injury where the doing is hindered. Thus our moral reason witnesses for a divine justice. Such justice, in its deepest, divinest sentiment, condemns sin as such, and is a disposition to punish it. We maintain this view.

3. *Sin Ought to be Punished.*—This proposition is freely affirmed, but with little regard to its proper analysis, and, therefore, with little apprehension of its meaning. A sinner may say, and with all sincerity, that he ought to be punished ; but all he means is, that he deserves to be punished. He has in mind and conscience his own demerit, and not the obligation of another respecting him. Often the term is used respecting sin in the same sense—that it deserves to be punished ; but this adds nothing to what we already have. The proposition is identical in meaning with a former one, which affirms the punitive desert of sin.

But the term *ought*, as used in the theory of Satisfaction, must have a ground in obligation, and that obligation must lie upon God as moral Ruler. Such is the requirement of the theory. If sin ought to be punished, God is under obligation to punish it. Such is the inevitable logic of the proposition. This carries Satisfactionists into a very high position, and very difficult to hold, but which they must hold or suffer a destructive

breach in their line of necessary principles. For such divine obligation, whether understood as included in the meaning of the proposition or not, is a logical implication and necessity of the scheme. And this obligation must be maintained simply on the ground of demerit in sin, and apart from all the interests of moral government. But for its proper discussion the question goes forward to a critical testing of the theory of Satisfaction.

4. *Penal Satisfaction a Necessity of Justice.*—Sin must be punished. It must be punished on its own account, and none the less in the total absence of all salutary influence of punishment, whether upon the sinner himself or upon the public virtue and welfare. It is a necessity of judicial rectitude in God. Divine justice must have penal satisfaction. This principle is really one with that immediately preceding. It is the last that we need name. And here we part with the theory of Satisfaction. We do not admit this principle. We reject it, not only as without evidence of its truth, but also because of evidence to the contrary.

5. *The Determining Principle.*—The irremissibility of penalty is the determining principle of the theory of Satisfaction. Merited penalty is absolutely irremissible on any and all grounds whatsoever. The scheme allows a commutation of persons in punishment, or will admit a substitute in place of the offender; but such an exchange of subjects in punishment is no omission of penalty. The offender is discharged, but his substitute suffers the deserved penalty in his stead; or suffers, at least, its penal equivalent with the divine law. This,

indeed, is the very averment of the doctrine. Nor is there any omission of punishment in an exchange of measure which justice permits in view of the higher rank of the substitute. In any and every way there is, and there must be, the infliction of deserved penalty. The sinner or his substitute must be punished according to the demerit of the sin. This is the necessity for an atonement in the scheme of Satisfaction.

Hence the absolute irremissibility of penalty determines the atonement to be by penal substitution. There is no other possible atonement. We know and welcome the account made of the rank and worth of Christ as penal substitute; an account logically valueless and unnecessary with the forms of identical and equal penalty, but consistent with that of equivalent penalty. But even here they are of account only as they give punitive value to his atoning sufferings; so that, as before noted, justice is satisfied with a less quantity in proportion to the higher quality. Still it is only penal suffering that counts in this element of atonement. And the very substance of such an atonement is substituted punishment in satisfaction of an absolute punitive justice.

V.

ANALYTIC TESTING OF THE THEORY.

1. *Justice as Satisfiable*.—Since it is so positively asserted that justice must have satisfaction in the punishment of sin, and since the fact itself is so essential to this theory, it is well to inquire wherein, or in what form of justice, this satisfaction may be realized.

Propositions given assertatively merely, may gain such currency as long to continue even unchallenged. Such, in some measure, is the fact respecting this ground-principle of the theory of Satisfaction. It has rightfully no such franchise. We shall more than challenge it. Hence we raise the question respecting the penal satisfiability of justice. A true answer is important; but to be given only in a correct view of cardinal facts in the case.

i. Mistake Easy.—One may easily affirm the necessary penal satisfaction of justice without any proper analysis of the proposition, and, therefore, without any proper apprehension of its meaning, and equally without any ground in truth. Hence it is easy to mistake the satisfiability of justice. Much, however, depends upon the conception of justice. If it be the conception of an ideal or impersonal justice, there is little occasion for mistake: for however exalted we may hold it to be—even if as eternal and immutable—as above God and the law of his own righteousness in moral administration—yet, as purely ideal or impersonal, we cannot reasonably regard it as satisfiable in any real or proper sense; certainly not in any sense answering to the requirement of the Satisfaction scheme. Mistake arises with the personification of an ideal justice. When we clothe it in personal attributes—intelligence, moral reason, resentment against sin, retributive wrath—then we may regard it as satisfiable, and as really satisfied with the punishment of sin. The idea simply completes the personification. But it is as far from the reality of truth as a mere personification is from a real personality.

Hence, if we would answer truly wherein, or in what form of it, justice may be satisfied with the punishment of sin, we must avoid all figurative modes of thought and expression, particularly of personification, and turn from an abstract to a concrete justice—to justice as a personal attribute.

ii. Satisfiable only in Personality.—Justice has no self-personality, and no separate self-existence. Nor is it satisfiable, except as a personal attribute or in personality.

In speaking, as we often do, of punishment as satisfying justice, we may have primary reference in thought to some personal injury or wrong, or to the demerit of sin, or to the legal penalty, or to the principle of justice; but satisfaction is so referable only as such conceptions represent personal sentiments of moral justice. And, strictly, the sense of satisfaction has reference solely to such personal sentiments. Without them justice can have no satisfaction in the punishment of sin, and is in no proper sense satisfiable.

Hence, if in any case we assert a necessary satisfaction of justice in the punishment of sin, we assume such a punitive disposition and sense of judicial obligation in some person or persons as will render the satisfaction possible, and as will inevitably execute the deserved penalty. There is no other law which can necessitate the punitive satisfaction of justice.

iii. True of Divine Justice.—Such are the facts of divine justice. It is not something separate or separable from God, except in abstract thought. Apart from him, it is void of all capacity for satisfaction in

punishment, and of all power and disposition to exact it. But justice as an attribute of God is penally satisfiable. As such, it is no impersonal or abstract principle. It is more than a mere cognitive judgment; it is a moral judgment, a condemnatory sense of sin, a moral resentment against it, a disposition to punish it. Such resentment and disposition of justice are right, as true to the demerit of sin and the divine holiness. Their satisfaction in the punishment of sin is the satisfaction of divine justice. Such is the only satisfaction.

When, therefore, Satisfactionists assert a necessity for the retributive satisfaction of divine justice in the definite sense of their own doctrine, they assume such a punitive disposition in God, or such a sense of obligation in the requirement of judicial rectitude, as must imperatively demand the satisfaction and necessitate the infliction of merited penalty in its realization. There can be in the justice of God no other necessitating law of penal satisfaction.

2. *Question of Necessity for Penal Satisfaction.*—Must God have the satisfaction of his justice in the punishment of sin? The question seems to reach toward unreachable heights. But those who allege the necessity lead the way; and if they may lead, we may follow. The real point, however, must be held in clear view. In such a question all jumbling must be carefully avoided. Nor must we lose sight of the facts which must condition and necessitate the satisfaction of justice. Such facts have, as we have seen, full application to the divine justice. Any necessity in God

for the punitive satisfaction of his justice must arise either from his own disposition as hostile to sin, or from his sense of judicial obligation as absolutely requiring its merited punishment. On the ground of such facts, must divine justice have retributive satisfaction?

3. *No Necessity in Divine Disposition.*—We admit and maintain a retributive justice in God. We also assert a punitive disposition as a fact of his justice. It hence follows, that, so far as this disposition is concerned, there is a divine impulse toward the punishment of sin, and a divine satisfaction therein. Is this disposition such as to necessitate the satisfaction?

It should be distinctly noted, that we are here concerned simply with this disposition. The rectoral office and obligation of justice, and the punishment of sin, simply on the ground of its demerit as a requirement of personal rectitude in God, are questions entirely apart from the one in hand, and to be treated separately.

In reasoning from a divine disposition, we must not forget that it is such, nor allege any thing respecting it inconsistent with the divine character. We may suppose a punitive disposition of men so vindictive and revengeful that only an insuperable hinderance would prevent its satisfaction in punishment. In a mere question of power there can be no such hinderance to the divine justice. But who would ascribe to God such a disposition as this analogy would suggest? Its admission would involve a denial of the possibility of an atonement. For such a disposition in God would necessarily exact penal satisfaction, and also by an equal

necessity exact it of the actual offender. As a personal disposition exacting personal satisfaction, it could admit no substitute in penalty. Besides, such a disposition is so contrary to the character of God as given in the Scriptures, that no one attempting the construction of a doctrine of atonement in the light of their teaching could maintain such a necessity for the punishment of sin.

Apart from this special aspect of the question, and treating it simply in view of a punitive disposition in God, there is no necessity for the punishment of sin from the fact of such a disposition. There is no necessity in the divine nature for the satisfaction of every divine impulse or feeling. Yet only such a necessity could conclude a necessity for the satisfaction of the punitive disposition. For if there be no such necessity respecting other divine dispositions, there may be none respecting this.

Besides, to assume a necessity for the satisfaction of all divine dispositions is to assume what is impossible; for in every instance of punitive satisfaction there is a sacrifice of the feeling of compassion. "For at the very instant when the immaculate holiness of God is burning with intensity, and reacting by an organic recoil against sin, the infinite pity of God is yearning with a fathomless desire to save the transgressor from *the effects of this very displeasure.*"¹ Nor is this any mere speculation or inference. Explicit words of Scripture give the fact of this divine sacrifice. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of

¹ Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," p. 270.

the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”¹ “How shall I give thee up? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together,” are his words of compassion over the perishing.² And he is declared to be “long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”³ The cross voices the truth and depth of this compassion. The precious blood thereon shed is the down-flowing of pitying love upon guilty souls. Now in the coincidence of divine feelings, so diverse in kind, complete satisfaction is impossible. Hence, the satisfaction of justice is no necessity of a punitive disposition in God.

4. *As Concerning the Divine Rectitude.*—We come to the gist of the question in the scheme of Satisfaction. On the punishment of sin as a requirement of the divine rectitude, very much is said assertatively. So far, a mere denial is all that a fair polemics requires. Yet we may further consider the main position of the doctrine under review. It is, that in the very rectitude of the divine justice sin must be punished, and, therefore, that substitutional punishment is the only possible atonement for sin.

But we want the exact position as concerning the divine rectitude. It must be separated from all else, and held in clear distinction. A retributive sentiment in God, as disposing him to the punishment of sin, has no place here. Nor has the rectoral office of justice any place in the present issue. All interests of moral government, as ends of justice in moral administration,

¹ Ezek. 33: 11.² Hosea 11: 8.³ 2 Pet. 3: 9.

are outside of the question. The position is, that in the maintenance of personal and judicial rectitude God must punish sin in the measure of its demerit, and solely on this ground. The requirement would be none the less imperative in the absence of all salutary influence of punishment upon the interest of moral government; indeed, none the less imperative, as the position is taken, were the result a detriment to such interest.

It will readily be asserted that even the supposition of such a detriment is not permissible. But the assertion is far from apodictic. Divine rewards, both pre-mial and punitive, have an office in the interest of moral government—necessarily an influence upon such interest. The tendency of the influence much depends upon the temper or disposition of the subjects of government: and the result, whether beneficial or detrimental, is determined by the view taken of such rewards; and not necessarily right views, or such as should be taken, but such as may be or actually are taken. Now it is certain that in secular government, of whatever form, punishment may be too severe, as well as too lenient, for the public good. The very severity has a hardening influence, engenders hatred, and the very spirit of rebellion. And subjects are the same in susceptibility to the rectoral influence of penalty under the divine as under human government. It is, therefore, a permissible supposition that even within the limit of demerit there is a possible severity of penalty which would be a detriment to the highest good of moral government. But even in such a case, the doctrine of Satisfaction asserts, and must assert, the pun-

ishment of sin in the full measure of its demerit as a necessity of the divine righteousness. And such a fact is sufficient for the disproof of a doctrine to which it is a logical consequent.

Is God under an absolute obligation to punish sin in the measure of its demerit, and solely on that ground? Is he under such an obligation that any omission of punishment, even in part, would be an injustice and a sacrifice of personal rectitude? The doctrine of Satisfaction answers affirmatively. This is its ground-principle for the necessity of an atonement, and determinative of its nature. The requirements of the divine rectitude in the case specially concern the two questions of veracity and justice.

5. *No Necessity of Divine Veracity.*—Some maintain the asserted necessity for punishment on the ground that the divine veracity is involved therein. God has proclaimed his own law, with its clearly expressed penalties, as due to sin. It is hence claimed that his word is really given for the execution of these penalties, and, therefore, that his truthfulness or fidelity to his own word requires the execution. Any omission would be a sacrifice of his personal rectitude.

This really gives another ground for the alleged necessity of punishment as concerning the divine rectitude. So far as the present position reaches, we might infer that if God had not given his word for the punishment of sin, he would be under no such obligation: but now, having so given his word, the obligation of veracity requires the execution of uttered penalty.

Such position is logically valid only on the ground that the divine utterances of penalty are absolute. All condition, even implied condition, must be excluded. How far is this the fact?

We admit that many divine utterances of penalty are absolute in form: we equally deny that all are so in fact. The Scriptures give us instances of implied conditionality with absolute form. The threatened doom of Nineveh was most absolute in form but not so in fact, as the result proved.¹ There are many like instances. No words could be more absolute in form than those which gave expression to the punishment of disobedience under the primitive probation: "For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."² It was not absolute in fact, else it must have been executed in exact accordance with its terms, as certainly it was not. Now such utterance of penalty, absolute in form but not so in fact, does not absolutely bind the divine veracity to its execution. And until the doctrine of Satisfaction can make good the position of absoluteness in the divine utterance of penalty, and in the fact as well as in the form, it has no sufficient premise for the consequence, that any remission of penalty, except through an equivalent substitutional punishment of sin, is a surrender of the divine rectitude in the matter of veracity.

We see clearly the seeming delicacy of the position here taken. Yet the facts are as we have given them. And we have only stated them, not made them. But it may be inferred that the position which we ground

¹ Jonah 3: 1-4, 10.

² Gen. 2: 17.

in such facts puts all penalty in uncertainty. It has no such consequence. There is never any remission, except on such ground and conditions as fully justify it. The ground is such, that except thereon there is absolutely no forgiveness. And the conditions are such, that except upon their observance there is absolutely no forgiveness. In the case of the first sin the divine administration was modified, and the sin rendered forgivable only through the incoming of a redemptive economy in Christ. Our sin is forgivable only on the ground of atonement. Except on such ground, there is absolutely no forgiveness. Salvation in Christ is freely offered on the condition of faith, but with the announced penalty of damnation to him who believes not. Thus, apart from Christ, and without faith in him, penalty is absolute, and in no uncertainty of execution.

But, further, the doctrine of Satisfaction cannot, except in self-destruction, base the necessity for penal substitution on the ground that the divine veracity requires the actual infliction of uttered penalty. Any such requirement must include the execution of penalty according to the very terms and import of its utterance. The divine penal utterances against sin are no more exact and positive in the designation of penalty than in the designation of its subject. It is no more absolutely affirmed that sin shall be punished with death than that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die"¹ And if the divine veracity requires the execution of penalty according to the terms of its utterance, clearly the case will admit no substitute in punishment. The

¹ Ezek. 18: 4, 20.

actual sinner must himself die Only this will fulfill the terms of the law. For illustration, take again the law of the primitive probation. "Death" is no more absolute as the penalty of disobedience, than "thou" as the subject of its infliction. And Satisfactionists themselves interpret this penalty of disobedience in Adam as death physical, spiritual, eternal, to him and also to all his posterity as in him, or represented by him, and, therefore, justly answerable in penalty for his sin. Hence, in the case of any other destiny for any one, the penalty is not executed according to the terms of its divine utterance.

The assumption of a necessity for substitutional punishment as the only atonement, because God has declared the punishment of sin, is such an assumption as must preclude vicarious atonement. No penal substitution can so answer to the terms of divinely-uttered penalty as to fulfill the alleged requirement in the divine veracity. No ingenuity in Scripture exegesis, nor any dialectic acumen, can make the punishment of a substitute the same, either in fact, justice, or law, as the punishment of the sinner himself. We have an alternative conclusion, and in either way, against the scheme under review. The doctrine of Satisfaction either makes good its position for the necessity of punishing sin as a requirement of the divine veracity, or it does not. In the former case, penal substitution is excluded, as being no clearance of the divine veracity; in the latter, no proof is brought from the alleged requirement of the divine veracity for penal substitution as the only possible atonement.

6. *No Necessity of Judicial Rectitude.*—It is proper here again sharply to discriminate the position in issue. Its advocates too often run into illegitimate argumentation. It is easy to assert, as so commonly done, that sin has intrinsic demerit; that God is holy and abhors it; that he must manifest his displeasure against it; that he must vindicate his justice and law before the moral universe. But such facts belong equally to another doctrine of atonement; some of them exclusively so. Why must God reveal his holiness? Why must he manifest his displeasure against sin? Why must he vindicate his justice and law before men and angels? The proper answer to such questions turns away from the atonement of Satisfaction and gives support to the Rectoral scheme. The position in issue is, that God must, in judicial rectitude, punish sin because of its demerit, and solely for this reason. No other reason must be here alleged. To allege any other, is to depart from all that is peculiar and essential to the scheme of Satisfaction. God would be unjust or remiss in the duty of justice in any omission of punishment, simply because of the intrinsic demerit of sin. By such omission, whatever other reason be present or absent, he would sacrifice his judicial rectitude. His administration would not be just. He would not fulfill the obligation of his justice. This is the position. It is essential to the doctrine of Satisfaction, and must be maintained, or the scheme fails.

How do we know of any such necessity in the judicial rectitude of God? How do we know that back of all the interests of moral government, and all require-

ments of the divine administration in their service, there is upon him an obligation to punish sin in the full measure of its desert? Such a principle is not given in the Scriptures. Nor is it inductively verifiable. It is no apodictive truth; and its *a priori* assertion is far above the power of our highest reason. Within the sphere of actual moral government we know something of God and his laws, as he has been pleased therein to reveal himself and them. Beyond this we know but little; certainly not enough for the assertion of a necessity in the divine rectitude to punish sin solely on the ground of its demerit. But if there be such a necessity, it must bar an economy of substitutional punishment, unless sin itself can be put upon the substitute in penalty. This, however, is impossible, even with God. But without penal substitution, or the punishment of sin in a substitute, the doctrine of Satisfaction is utterly groundless.

There is neither injustice nor omission of justice, except in some wrong or omission of duty. And there can be neither, except in respect of some right or interest. A father omits the deserved punishment of his son. This is no wrong to the son simply in the matter of his demerit, because demerit is not in the nature of a personal right. But the impunity supposed might be to the detriment of the son, or of the family government. Here is a reason for punishment, and such as would render its omission a wrong; but a reason outside of the demerit in the case, and arising in the sphere of rights and interests concerned. A crime is committed, and the criminal is suffered to go unpunished. This,

so far as his desert is concerned, is no injustice to him; for, again, punitive demerit is not in the nature of a personal right. So far as punishment might have a restraining or reformatory influence upon the criminal, any obligation is with the administration, but with respect to the criminal's interest, not his demerit. Or, his impunity might encourage crime, to the serious detriment of the community. In such a case omission of punishment would be an injustice or wrong, not, however, because of demerit in the criminal, but because of a neglect of the rights and interests of others which justice should protect.

Such principles equally apply to divine justice. One sins against God. His sin has intrinsic demerit, and, apart from every thing else, deserves the penalty of justice. But demerit in itself simply, neither constitutes any punitive right in the sinner nor imposes any punitive obligation upon God. All that it does or can do is to render punishment just; while any punitive obligation of justice must arise in respect of rights or interests either personal to the sinner or appertaining to others which justice should protect. On the ground of demerit, punishment for such ends is just, which it would not be without the demerit. And surely an infinitely just, wise, and good Sovereign may take account of such great ends, and determine his punitive ministries simply in view of them. Nor can any omission of punishment by the divine Ruler be a violation of judicial rectitude, except such omission be an avoidable detriment to some right or interest. But when we go beyond the demerit of sin as the only ground of just

punishment, and find the reason for its infliction in rights, whether of the divine Ruler or his subjects, we find such reason, not in the most essential principle of the Satisfaction scheme, but in facts which go into the Rectoral theory, and give their support to it.

We are all under the obligations of a divine law, with its precepts, promises, penalties. One obeys, and rightfully claims the promised reward. He is wronged if it be withheld, because an acquired right is denied him. Such is the fact irrespective of all questions of rectoral influence from the character of the administration. But there is with justice a double reason for giving the promised reward: an acquired right, and the interest of a salutary rectoral influence. Another disobeys, and thereby acquires a desert of punishment, but no right to it. Either himself or others might suffer wrong on account of his impunity; but, as we have before seen, the consequent obligation to punish him arises entirely apart from his demerit. And it is still true that the consequence of his demerit is simply to render his punishment just. He may, therefore, be justly punished, either for his own good or for the good of others.

Nor do such views cast any doubt upon justice as an essential attribute of God. It is such an attribute. So is love. And neither excludes the other, though love is supreme. And God rules, not simply as just, but also as eternally wise and good. Penalty has a special function in his government. It is a rightful means for the vindication of his own honor and authority, and for the conservation of the rights and interest of his sub-

jects. And justice does not cease to be such, nor become injustice, by any omission of penalty which does not contravene such ends of its infliction. Its punitive obligation is fulfilled when penalty is so wisely and benevolently, as well as justly, executed, as to achieve in the highest degree attainable the great ends of moral government.

¹ The doctrine of punishment maintained is without logical consequence respecting its duration. It would follow, that should punishment ever cease to be a rectoral necessity it might then terminate. But this fact is without logical consequence in the case, because the duration of punishment is a question of revelation, not of reason.

Were the duration of punishment treated as a question of reason, it would be necessary to prove two things by rational evidence in order to conclude its eternity: one, that sin deserves eternal punishment; the other, that it must be punished in the measure of its desert. Reason can prove neither. But, while we write this, we further write that reason is equally powerless to disprove the eternity of punishment. The question of its necessary duration is above the sphere of her powers. On the ground of such facts, our doctrine is without logical consequence respecting the duration of punishment.

This is a question of revelation, and as purely so as the question of the divine Trinity, the incarnation of the Son, or the resurrection of the dead. On the ground of revelation the eternity of punishment is fearfully certain. It is, therefore, both just and necessary, because it is the ministry of a just God, and infinitely wise and good as well as just. Such is the order of these facts. The Scriptures do not first posit an infinite demerit of sin as the ground and necessity of endless penalty; but, conversely, they give the fact of endless penalty, and with this, as an inevitable implication in view of the character of the divine Ruler, its justice and necessity. And we add nothing to the certainty or proof of endless penalty by assuming that it is a necessity simply from the demerit of sin. Nor do we in the least abate the force of its Scripture proof as a fact—the only real proof in the case—by a denial of its absolute necessity simply to that demerit.

7. *Elements of Punitive Satisfaction.*—Divine justice, traced to its only satisfiable form as a punitive disposition or obligation in God, has, apart from a salutary rectoral influence, only two supposable elements of satisfaction in the execution of penalty: one, in the mere suffering inflicted; the other, in the punishment of sin. The two are clearly separable, at least in thought, and together cover the whole case. There is no other element of such satisfaction.

8. *No Satisfaction in Mere Suffering.*—The first is, of course, excluded. We could not say that it never had any place in religious sentiment or opinion. It would be none the less reprobate on that account. And only a fanatical dogmatist, with the temper of an inquisitor and a morbidity of the moral nature, could understandingly give it a place either in his conscience or creed. Any pleasure of any community or officer of the law simply in the sufferings of a criminal is a cruelty and a sin. And no place should be given to the notion of such a fact in God. As a God of love, without pleasure in the death of the wicked, he punishes no sinner without pity for his sufferings. It is impossible, therefore, that he should find satisfaction in his sufferings simply.

9. *Only Satisfaction in Punishing Sin.*—Is there a satisfaction of divine justice in the punishment of sin? Yes; and we so answer without any hesitation. It is realized in a punitive disposition of justice. But this is far short of the doctrine of Satisfaction in the assertion that such satisfaction must be had. On this position it fails, as we have previously shown. But, further,

while there is a satisfaction of divine justice in the punishment of sin—sin with its turpitude and demerit—the satisfaction is realized *only therein*. It is not, else, possible. Take away the conditioning facts of sin, and only the suffering remains with justice. But in this it can find no pleasure.

10. *Satisfaction by Substitution Impossible*. — The atonement is in the satisfaction of justice by penal substitution. This is a vital principle in the theory. There is no atonement without this satisfaction; nor can there be any. So the deepest principles of the theory determine.

It is entirely truthful, and not uncharitable, to say that here Satisfactionists themselves find no little perplexity. Indeed, it would be a marvelous fact if they did not. And the vacillations of opinion and diversities of view which the history of the doctrine records, bear ample testimony to this perplexity.¹

The effect of the imputation of sin to Christ, and the nature and degree of his penal sufferings, are questions entering deeply into the difficulties of the subject. Did imputation carry over sin, with its turpitude and demerit, or only its guilt to him? Did he suffer, instead of the elect, the same punishment which, otherwise, they must have suffered? Did he endure penal suffering equal in amount, though differing in kind, to the merited punishment of the redeemed? Did he suffer an equivalent punishment, less in amount but of higher value, and thus a penal equivalent with justice? Did

¹ Prof. Bruce: "The Humiliation of Christ," pp. 378–384, 488–492; "Methodist Quarterly Review," July, 1846, pp. 403–410.

he suffer the torment of the finally lost? Was his punishment potentially or intensively eternal? Such questions have been asked and answered affirmatively; though a negative is now mostly given to those of more extreme import. The boldness of earlier expositors is mainly avoided in the caution of the later. The former are more extravagant; the latter, less consistent. But the theory, in every phase of it, asserts the just punishment of sin in Christ; and, therefore, asserts or implies all that is requisite to such punishment. A denial of any such requisite is suicidal.

In denying the possible satisfaction of a purely retributive justice by a substitute in penalty, we are content to make the issue with the more moderate and carefully guarded position of Satisfactionists. This is but polemical fairness, as such is now the more common position.

i. The Satisfaction Necessary.—The necessary satisfaction of justice, as maintained in this theory, respects not merely a punitive disposition in God, but specially and chiefly an obligation of his justice to punish sin according to its demerit, and on that ground. And it is because the punishment of sin is a necessity in the rectitude of divine justice, that the only possible atonement is by penal substitution.

This position is so important in the present question, that we should have the views of leading Satisfactionists respecting it. "The law of God, which includes a penalty as well as precepts, is in both a revelation of the nature of God. If the precepts manifest his holiness, the penalty as clearly manifests his justice. If the one is immutable, so also is the other. The wages of sin is

death. Death is what is due to it in justice, and what, without injustice, cannot be withheld from it.”¹ “Justice is a form of moral excellence. It belongs to the nature of God. It demands the punishment of sin. If sin be pardoned, it can be pardoned in consistency with the divine justice only on the ground of a forensic penal satisfaction.”² “The Scriptures, however, assume that if a man sins he must die. On this assumption all their representations and arguments are founded. Hence the plan of salvation which the Bible reveals supposes that the justice of God, which renders the punishment of sin necessary, has been satisfied.”³

The position maintained in these citations is clearly given, and fully agrees with our statement. From the nature of justice the punishment of sin is necessary. The obligation of justice is such that any omission of punishment would be an act of injustice. Thus, from the very nature of divine justice, the necessary punishment of sin is deduced as a consequence. Justice is as essential and immutable in God as any other attribute; therefore he must punish sin according to its desert, and on that ground. Thus his justice binds him to the infliction of merited punishment upon sin, just as other moral perfections bind him to holiness, goodness, truth.

We may give additional authorities. “But again, concerning this justice, another question arises, Whether it be natural to God, or an *essential attribute of the divine nature*—that is to say, such that the existence of sin being admitted, God must necessarily exercise it, be-

¹ Dr. Hodge: “Systematic Theology,” vol. i, p. 423.

² Ibid., vol. ii, p. 488.

³ Ibid., vol. ii, p. 492.

cause it supposes in him a constant immutable will to punish sin, so that while he acts consistently with his nature he cannot do otherwise than punish and avenge it—or whether it be a free act of the divine will, which he may exercise at pleasure?"¹ This is submitted as a question. There are really two questions; but we are concerned simply with the fact that Owen maintains the position of the former: and we are now concerned with this only, in its relation to penal substitution. It asserts a necessity in the very nature of God for the punishment of sin simply as such; a necessity, not from the domination of a punitive disposition, but from the requirement of judicial rectitude.

"God is determined, by the immutable holiness of his nature, to punish all sin because of its intrinsic guilt or demerit; the effect produced on the moral universe being incidental as an end."² "Law has no option. Justice has but one function. The law itself is under law; that is, it is under the necessity of its own nature; and, therefore, the only possible way whereby a transgressor can escape the penalty of law, is for a substitute to endure it for him."³ Here, again, we have the same doctrine of an immutable obligation of divine justice to punish sin, and none the less in the absence of every other reason than its own demerit. We here make no issue with the doctrine, but, as before noted, give it prominence on account of its vital logical connection with the doctrine of penal substitution.

¹ Owen: "Works," (Goold's,) vol. x, p. 505.

² Dr A A Hodge: "The Atonement," p. 53.

³ Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," p. 287.

ii. The Substitution Maintained.—There is also a vital logical connection between the imputation of sin to Christ and his penal substitution in atonement. In any proper treatment of the question the two facts must be in scientific accordance. And we have, with the carefully guarded doctrine of substitution, an equally cautious exposition of the imputation of sin to Christ. In such exposition, sin is treated analytically, not as a concrete whole. This is necessary to the moderation of the theory maintained. For to treat sin as a whole, and to allege its imputation to Christ and just punishment in him, is to involve the facts of the more extravagant theory. Guilt is distinguished from the attributes of turpitude, criminality, demerit, and claimed to be separable from sin in the deeper sense, both in thought and fact. It is freely admitted that the transference and substitutional punishment of sin in the former sense is an impossibility; but it is fully claimed that guilt—the amenability of sin to the penalty of justice—could be transferred to Christ and justly punished in him.

We shall give this view from Dr. Charles Hodge. It has no better authority. “By guilt, many insist on meaning personal criminality and ill desert; and by punishment, evil inflicted on the ground of such personal demerit. In these senses of the words the doctrine of satisfaction and vicarious punishment would, indeed, involve an impossibility. . . . And if punishment means evil inflicted on the ground of personal demerit, then it is a contradiction to say that the innocent can be punished. But if guilt expresses only the relation

of sin to justice, and is the obligation under which the sinner is placed to satisfy its demands, then there is nothing . . . which forbids the idea that this obligation may, on adequate grounds, be transferred from one to another, or assumed by one in the place of others."¹ The omission cannot, in the least, affect the sense of the author.

Leading facts are clearly given in the passage cited. One is, that moral character is absolutely untransferable; another, that if punishment is a judicial infliction upon the ground of personal demerit, the satisfaction of justice by penal substitution is impossible. Hence the distinction of sin into personal demerit and guilt, and the assumption that the latter, as the legal amenability of sin, could be transferred to Christ, and punished in him in fulfillment of the punitive obligation of justice.

iii. No Answer to the Necessity.—We now have the facts respecting the alleged necessity for the punishment of sin, and also the facts of penal substitution as meeting that necessity. Do the latter answer to the requirements of the former? Does the penal substitution, maintained, fulfill the alleged absolute obligation of justice to punish sin according to its demerit? There is no such answer or fulfillment. So we affirm, and proceed to the proof.

The analytic treatment of sin is entirely proper if it be remembered that such treatment is in thought only. And we may distinguish between the demerit and the guilt of sin, using the former term in the sense of its

¹ "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, p. 532.

intrinsic evil, and the latter in the sense of its amenability to retributive justice. In the former sense, we have sin in the violation of obligation; in the latter, under judicial treatment. Is such distinction a sufficient ground for the more moderate theory of substitutional punishment constructed upon it? If so sufficient, will such substitution answer to the absolute necessity for the punishment of sin which the theory asserts?

It should here be specially noted that the principles of the theory are not even modified, much less surrendered. They are still asserted and held in all their integrity and strength as the very necessity for an atonement, and as determinative of its nature in the substitutional punishment of sin. We have previously seen what these principles are.¹ And they are inseparable from the doctrine of Satisfaction. We have also given citations from leading authors in the unqualified assertion of an absolute necessity for the punishment of sin.² Advocates of the more moderate theory of imputation and penal substitution are no exception. All agree in the obligation of divine justice to punish sin according to its demerit, and on that ground. But it is denied that the turpitude and demerit of sin can be transferred to Christ. All that is claimed, or even admitted to be so transferred, is the guilt of sin; guilt as an amenability to the retribution of justice. Is such a substitution the merited punishment of sin?

Nothing could be punished in Christ which was not transferred to him, and in some proper sense made his.

¹ In IV of this chapter.

² In 10, ¶ of this section.

This we regard as apodictic. Hence if sin, with its demerit, could not, as now admitted, be put upon Christ by imputation, no punishment which he suffered fell upon such demerit, or intrinsic evil of sin. And we think it impossible to show how sin is punished according to its demerit, and on that ground, in the total absence of such demerit from the substitute in punishment. With the admissions of the theory, its only resource is with guilt as a distinct fact of sin. If guilt, as the amenability of sin to the penalty of justice, is separable from sin, and as a distinct fact transferable to Christ—and if his punishment, as so constituted guilty, is the punishment of sin according to its demerit and on that ground—then the penal substitution maintained answers to the asserted absolute necessity for the punishment of sin. If any one of these suppositive facts fail the theory, then the theory itself inevitably fails.

Guilt, as distinctively treated in this theory, arises in the relation of sin to divine justice, and as an obligation of sin to suffer the merited penalty of justice. It is so defined and discriminated from the turpitude of sin in the carefully exact statement recently cited from Dr. Charles Hodge. He makes the same distinction elsewhere.¹ But guilt, considered as apart from sin, exists only in conception, not in objective reality. It may be said that it becomes a concrete fact in Christ by imputation to him. Then the result is a guilty Christ. But guilty of what? Not of sin, for that is not transferred to him, nor in any proper sense made

¹ "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, p. 189.

his. Guilty of guilt, we may suppose. For as guilt is the only thing imputed, and the imputation makes him guilty, we find not any better expression of the fact in the case. There seems a harshness even in such an expression; yet it is mollified by the fact, that at most Christ is guilty of only a conceptual guilt.

But the original difficulty remains. Guilt, apart from sin, is still guilt in the abstract, and exists only in conception, as much so as roundness, concavity, redness. And how could such a conceptual guilt render Christ guilty, or constitute in him a just ground of punishment? It were as easy to transform a cube into a globe by imputing sphericity to it. But is not guilt a reality? Certainly, and a terrible one; but only as a concrete fact of sin. And with the imputation of such an abstract guilt to Christ, while sin, with its turpitude and demerit, with all that is punishable and all that deserves to be punished left behind, how can the redemptive suffering which he endured be the merited punishment of sin?

iv. No such Answer Possible.—Guilt cannot exist apart from sin. It is impossible by the very definition of it as the obligation of sin to the retribution of justice. The necessary conjunction of facts is obvious. On the one side is justice, with its precept and penalty, on the other, sin; hence, guilt. There is guilt, because justice asserts a penal claim upon sin. The demerit of sin, the intrinsic evil of sin, is the only ground of such a claim. Nothing but sin can be guilty, or render any one guilty. And there can no more be guilt apart from sin, than there can be extension without either substance

or space. It is not in itself punishable, but simply the punitive amenability of sin to justice. It cannot, therefore, be so put upon Christ as to render him punishable, unless the very sin is put upon him. But this is conceded to be impossible.

Indeed, sin itself is a punishable reality only as a personal fact. In the last analysis only a person, only a sinful person, is punishable. We may here apply such a principle as we applied to justice as punitively satisfiable. Such is no impersonal justice, or justice in generalized conception, but justice as a personal attribute. So, not any impersonal sin, or sin in generalized conception, but only a sinful person, is answerable to justice in penalty. Sin has no real existence apart from the agent in the sinning. The guilt of sin lies upon him, and can no more be put upon a substitute as a punitive desert than his sinful act can cease to be his and be made the sinful act of such substitute.

But the principles of the Satisfaction scheme still remain, with the necessity for the punishment of sin according to its demerit, and on that ground. So imperative is this obligation, that any omission of such punishment would be an injustice in God. With this the very masters in the theory fully agree. Indeed, there is no dissent. Is sin so punished in Christ? It is not, even if we admit the separability of guilt and its transference to Christ. Guilt is not sin. The scheme itself carefully discriminates the two. Such is its necessity, as it denies the transferableness of sin. For, otherwise, it has nothing which it may even claim to be transferred as the ground of merited punishment. By

the alleged facts of the scheme, no penalty is inflicted upon sin. Yet its punishment is the asserted absolute requirement of moral rectitude in divine justice. And the conclusion is most certain, that the penal substitution which the theory of Satisfaction holds can give no answer to the necessity for the punishment of sin which it asserts.

11. *The Theory Self-destructive.*—The necessary punishment of sin and the nature of penal substitution, which the theory maintains and seeks to combine in the doctrine of Satisfaction, absolutely refuse all scientific fellowship. Yet the theory can neither dispense with the one nor so modify the other as to agree with it. The former is its very ground-principle, and therefore cannot be dispensed with. The necessary modification of the latter, in order to a scientific agreement with the former, would require a transference of the turpitude and demerit of sin to Christ; therefore such modification must be rejected. Consequently, whether there be or be not an absolute necessity for the punishment of sin, the theory of Satisfaction is self-destructive. For with such a necessity, not only does the penal substitution maintained utterly fail to answer to its imperative requirement, but no possible substitution can so answer. But without such a necessity for the punishment of sin, the theory is utterly groundless. Therefore, whether there be or be not the asserted necessity for the punishment of sin, the theory is self-destroyed

VI.

FACTS OF THE THEORY IN OBJECTION.

Much has been anticipated which might have been arranged under objections. Yet much remains, but requiring only a brief treatment in view of previous discussions.

1. *The Punishment of Christ.*—It is a weighty objection to the theory under review that it makes the punishment of Christ necessary to atonement. The punishment is in satisfaction of justice. Its desert in him is imputed sin. Justice must punish sin: therefore it must punish sin in Christ as a substitute in atonement. There is no other possible atonement.

But the imputation of sin has insuperable difficulties. This is especially true of its imputation to Christ. Such is the confession in the caution which discriminates between sin and guilt, and admits only the latter in imputation. It shocks our moral reason to think of Christ as a sinner even by imputation. Yet such imputation is a nullity for all purposes of this theory, unless it makes our sins in some real sense his. For otherwise there can be no pretense even of their merited punishment in him. If the imputation of sin is in order to its just punishment, and sufficient for that end, really the view of Luther is none too strong: "For Christ is innocent as concerning his own person, and therefore he ought not to have been hanged upon a tree; but because, according to the law of Moses, every thief and malefactor ought to be hanged, therefore Christ also, according to the law, ought to be hanged;

for he sustained the person of a sinner and of a thief—not of one, but of all sinners and thieves.”¹ There is much more such, and some even worse. Others maintain a like position, if not with the same boldness of utterance. It is only through such an imputation that justice could fulfill, by substitution, its asserted absolute obligation to punish sin according to its demerit.

Such fatal implication is not avoided by the assumption of an imputation merely of guilt. It is still the guilt of sin, and renders Christ guilty in a sense that he may be justly punished. Nor are we confounding the discriminated *reatus culpæ* and *reatus poenæ* of theologians; though the distinction is useless for the purpose of finding a guilt that may exist and be punished apart from sin, and especially with the notion that sin is thereby punished. The guilt which answers to justice in penalty is the guilt of sin. If Christ so answered as a substitute for the elect, he must have been guilty of all their sins. Hence the theory under review should neither discard the bold utterances of Luther nor seek shelter under an utterly futile distinction between sin and guilt. On any consistent supposition it must hold Christ as guilty of all the sins which suffered their merited punishment in him. But he never could be so guilty: hence the doctrine of atonement which implies and requires such a fact cannot be the true doctrine.

2. *Redeemed Sinners Without Guilt.*—The atonement of Satisfaction has this logical implication, that all for whom it is made are without guilt. Such

¹ Commentary on Galatians, chap. 3: 13.

an atonement is, by its very nature, a discharge from all amenability to the penalty of justice. Explicit statements of its leading advocates are in full accord with this position. Nor has such a consequence any avoidance by any real distinction between *meritum culpæ* and *meritum poenæ*. In any reality of such distinction there may be personal demerit without legal guilt; though we have denied, and do deny, to the theory under review the truth of the converse, that there may be such guilt without such demerit. But here we raise no question whether sinners, simply as redeemed, are still in the personal demerit of sin. Our position respects guilt as the amenability of sin to the penalties of justice, and asserts that, according to the atonement of Satisfaction, the elect for whom it is made are, in their whole life, and however wicked, entirely free from such guilt. There is for them neither judicial condemnation nor liability to punishment. The penalties of justice, pending in the divine threatenings, have no imminence for them.

The scheme ever asserts an absolute necessity for the punishment of sin. It equally asserts such a penal substitution of Christ in the place of the elect as fully satisfies the penal claim of justice against them. Thus justice fulfilled its own retributive obligation in the punishment of sin, just as though it had inflicted the merited penalty upon them. God has accepted the penal substitution for their own punishment. All is in strict accord with a covenant agreement between the Father and the Son, as the theory asserts. Now such an atonement, by its very nature, cancels all punitive

claim against the elect, and by immediate result forever frees them from all guilt as a liability to the penalty of sin. We know that such a consequence is denied, though we shall show that it is also fully asserted.

It is attempted to obviate this consequence by a distinction between a pecuniary and a penal obligation: "Another important difference between pecuniary and penal satisfaction is, that the one *ipso facto* liberates. The moment the debt is paid the debtor is free, and that completely. No delay can be admitted, and no conditions can be attached to his deliverance. But in the case of a criminal, as he has no claim to have a substitute take his place, if one be provided, the terms on which the benefits of his substitution shall accrue to the principal are matters of agreement between the substitute and the magistrate who represents justice." Such a distinction will not accord with the penal substitution of Christ. The ground-principle of the doctrine is, that sin must be punished according to its demerit, and on that ground; must be, because of an immutable obligation of justice so 'to punish it. Then by the penal substitution of Christ sin is so punished in him, and the obligation of justice fulfilled. Such are the facts of the doctrine. On the ground of such facts, a discharge must immediately follow upon such penal substitution, just as on the payment of a debt.

So Dr. Hodge gives the facts in less than two pages in advance of the previous citation. "If the claims of justice are satisfied they cannot be again enforced. This is the analogy between the work of Christ and

¹ Dr. Hodge: "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, pp. 470, 471.

the payment of a debt. The point of agreement between the two cases is not the nature of the satisfaction rendered, but one aspect of the effect produced. In both cases the persons for whom the satisfaction is made are certainly freed. Their exemption or deliverance is in both cases, and equally in both, a matter of justice.”¹ We shall attempt no improvement here; for we can give neither a better statement of the facts in the case nor a better reply to the citation just before given from the same author.

We may add a few authorities. “Will God punish sin twice, first in the person of the Surety, and then in the persons themselves, in whose place he stood? It would be acknowledged, without a dissenting voice, that in any other case this would be a manifest injustice. But ‘is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid: the Judge of all the earth will do right.’”² “The death of Christ being a legal satisfaction for sin, all for whom he died must enjoy the remission of their offenses. It is as much at variance with strict justice or equity that any for whom Christ has given satisfaction should continue under condemnation, as that they should have been delivered from guilt without any satisfaction being given for them at all.”³ A Satisfactionist could hardly put the case more strongly. “For if, in consequence of his suretyship, the debt has been transferred to Christ and by him discharged, every one must see that it has been taken away from the

¹ “Systematic Theology,” vol. ii, p. 472. See also pp. 482, 487, 494.

² Dr. John Dick: “Theology,” vol. ii, p. 556.

³ Dr. Symington: “Atonement and Intercession,” p. 190.

primary debtors, so that payment cannot be demanded of them. They must forever afterward remain free, absolved from all obligation to punishment."¹

Such authorities may suffice for our position. Indeed, we did not really need any, as such freedom from guilt is in the inevitable logic of an atonement by penal substitution. But such moral support should silence all cavil.

The position is sometimes taken, that, in a penal satisfaction, the actual forgiveness is subject to such time and conditions as the sovereign authority may determine. It cannot be maintained. Otherwise, all the reasonings in the above citations, and given from the very masters in this doctrine, are fallacious. It is overthrown by the analogy of result between a pecuniary and a penal satisfaction. In the latter case, as in the former, the claim of the obligee is fully satisfied, and the discharge of the party in obligation must immediately issue. The case can admit no delay and no conditions for the discharge. And no sin of the redeemed, once justly punished in Christ as an accepted substitute, can for an instant be answerable to justice in penalty, or in any sense be liable to punishment. The redeemed are without guilt.

Is such a position in accord with the real fact in the case? Sin is sin, whenever and by whomsoever committed. As such it has legal guilt as well as personal demerit. It is under judicial condemnation, and in peril of retribution.

Such facts are in full accord with a common experi-

¹ Turretin: "The Atonement of Christ," p. 146.

ence of souls in coming into the spiritual life. In such an experience there is more than a deep sense of personal demerit; there is also a deep sense of peril in the apprehension of divine penalty. Many a soul just on the verge of the new life is full of trembling in this apprehension. Really, there is no cause, if the true doctrine of atonement is in the just punishment of sin by substitution. But there is cause in every such case, and for the reason of guilt and judicial condemnation. The trembling apprehension is in the recognition of a terrible reality. Among the eminent for piety, and, therefore, certainly of the elect and redeemed, are some once very wicked. Were they then without guilt or judicial condemnation? Was there for them no imminence of penal retribution? Was it so with Paul, and Augustine, and John Newton, and many others such? If so, there was a deep deception in their profoundest religious consciousness. And it is a mistake ever arising under the immediate work of the Holy Spirit in conviction for sin. As under his revealing light and convincing power the soul awakes, it not only feels within the deep evil of sin, but even sees without the threatening penalty of divine justice. And there is no self-deception in such cases.

And what of the divine threatenings against all sin and all sinners? Have they no meaning for the redeemed? Or are they like the overtures of grace which a limited atonement freely makes to all, but with real meaning for only the elect and redeemed part? On the doctrine of Satisfaction, such divine threatenings signal no imminence of divine wrath for the redeemed.

And what of all the Scripture terms of forgiveness and remission of sins? Have they no meaning of an actual discharge from guilt and penalty in the hour of an actual salvation? Or is their full meaning in a declaration simply of a discharge long before actually achieved through penal substitution? When Jesus said, as often to one or another, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," was it no actual forgiveness then granted? Without such a forgiveness, there is no pertinence in the proof which he gave of a "power on earth to forgive sins."¹

A doctrine of atonement encountering such facts as we have given, and facts so decisive against it, cannot be the true doctrine.

3. *A Limited Atonement.*—The theory has this consequence, and avows it. Such an atonement is in its own nature saving. The salvation of all whom Christ represents in his mediatorial work must issue. "The advocates of a limited atonement reason from the effect to the cause."² Dr. Schaff is entirely correct in this, as might be shown by many examples. Nor is there a contrary instance. But the reasoning is logically valid for a limited atonement only on the ground that such an atonement is necessarily saving. For thus only is the fact of a limited actual salvation conclusive of a limited atonement. Hence Calvinistic divines who hold a general atonement, consistently reject the doctrine of Satisfaction. Lutheranism, in holding both, is utterly unscientific.

¹ Matt. 9: 6.

² Dr. Schaff: "Creeds of Christendom," vol. 1, p. 521.

But the full force of the objection to the Satisfaction scheme, from the fact that it involves the consequence of a limited atonement, cannot be given here. It lies in the Scripture fact of universality in the atonement, which will be treated in its place.¹ For the present we name it as fatal to the theory of Satisfaction. If, in the divine destination, the atonement is really for all, as we shall prove it to be, then this theory cannot be the true one.

4. *Element of Commutative Justice.*—The scheme is complicated with commutative justice. We know well the vigorous denial. But denial does not void a logical implication. Commutative justice has its principle as well as its usual commodities. In any obligation the principle claims the sum due, either in the identical thing or in its equivalent in value. One or the other it must have. It freely admits substitution. A surety or proxy may satisfy the claim as well as the debtor himself. One thing may be accepted in the stead of another, if its equivalent in value.

Such is the principle, and such are the characteristic facts, in the doctrine of Satisfaction. Justice requires the punishment of sin as a rightful claim. It will accept a substitute in penalty, and also a less punishment, if of such higher quality as to be of equal value. Thus in principle and characteristic facts it is at one with commutative justice. The actual and necessary discharge of the redeemed from all amenability to the penalty of justice, on account of the satisfaction of its claim by penal substitute, is a legitimate sequence of

¹ Chapter xii.

the same principle. So is a limited atonement in view of a limited actual salvation.

Nor is there any avoidance of such complication by an alleged difference between a pecuniary and a penal claim — one on the property of the debtor, and the other on his person. Both are personal to the debtor — one for satisfaction in his property, and the other for satisfaction in his punishment. The likeness still remains. There is a oneness of the two. The theory is seriously complicated with commutative justice. We do not wonder at the vigorous resistance to such an implication, though not a few avow all that really belongs to it. A measure of virtual commercial barter in the atonement degrades it.

CHAPTER VIII.

GOVERNMENTAL THEORY.

THIS theory also has already come into view more than once. But it is proper to treat it more directly and fully, as we have the other two leading theories. Yet the discussion will require the less elaboration, as many of the principles and facts appertaining to the theory have previously been given, and more or less considered. It mainly concerns us now to bring them together, and to set them in the order of a proper method, and in the light of a more exact and definitive statement.

We have indicated our acceptance of this theory as the true theory of atonement. But we so accept it in what really constitutes it a theory, and not in any particular exposition as hitherto given: much less in its diversities as it stands in the history of doctrinal theology. It has not always been fortunate in its exposition. It was not entirely so in the beginning. Its cardinal principles have been clearly enough given. With these given, a true construction of the doctrine should follow. Such, however, has not always been the case. The treatment has often been deficient in analysis or scientific method. Alien elements have been retained; vital facts omitted or wrongly placed. We hold the doctrine as we shall construct and maintain it. As such, it is the doctrine of a real and necessary atonement in Christ. It denies to the Moral theory a right-

ful position as such. And as the true doctrine is really with the theory of Satisfaction or the Governmental, the error of the former concludes the truth of the latter. It will answer to all the requirements of Scripture interpretation, and to the profoundest necessity for an atonement.

I.

PRELIMINARY FACTS.

The discussion of the nature of the atonement as represented in the Governmental theory will run through this chapter and the next succeeding one. It will also be involved in the last one—universality of the atonement. The question of extent is more than a question of fact; it concerns the doctrine also. With this Satisfactionists fully agree. And the next chapter, while given to the elements of sufficiency in the redemptive mediation of Christ, treats them in view of the principles of atonement, and thus involves its nature.

1. *Substitutional Atonement.*—The sufferings of Christ are an atonement for sin by substitution, in the sense that they were intentionally endured for sinners under judicial condemnation, and for the sake of their forgiveness. They are an atonement for sin in the sense that they render its forgiveness consistent with the divine justice. They provide for such consistency, in the sense that justice none the less fulfills its rectoral office in the interest of moral government. Such office of justice is so fulfilled in the sense that, in granting forgiveness only on the ground of such a substitution in atonement, the honor and authority of the divine Ruler, together with the rights and interests of his

subjects, are equally maintained as by the infliction of merited penalty upon sin. Such facts, here merely stated, will have their unfolding in the progress of discussion.

2. *Conditional Substitution*.—The forgiveness of sin has a real conditionality. The fact is given in the clearest utterances of Scripture. It is given in the fact of demerit for refusing the overtures of redemptive grace. It is also given as the only explanation of the fact that, with a real atonement for all, some perish. An atonement for all by absolute substitution would inevitably achieve the salvation of all. The logic of the case gives us this consequence. Satisfactionists freely give it. Their soteriology requires it. It must be so. Therefore a universal atonement, with the fact of a limited actual salvation, is conclusive of a real conditionality in its saving grace. It follows, inevitably, that such an atonement is conditional or provisory, not immediately and necessarily, saving.

The substitution of Christ in atonement for sin must be of a nature consistent with these facts. In such a substitution as would make his vicarious suffering the merited punishment of sin, all for whom he so suffers must be discharged from guilt; must be, even on the ground of justice. This we have shown before. We should thus have an absolute substitution in penalty, together with a provisory atonement and a conditional forgiveness. But such facts have no scientific accordance, and it is impossible to combine them in a doctrine of atonement.

3. *Substitution in Suffering*.—The substitution of Christ must be of a nature agreeing with the provisory

character of the atonement. It could not, therefore, be a substitution in penalty as the merited punishment of sin, for such an atonement is absolute. The substitution, therefore, is in suffering, without the penal element. This agrees with the nature of the atonement as a moral support of justice in its rectoral office, rendering forgiveness consistent with the interest of moral government.

Nor could the sufferings of Christ have been, in any strict or proper sense, a punishment. Demerit, the only ground of punishment, is personal to the actual sinner, and without possible transference.¹ We have seen the futility of attempting the transference of guilt without sin. The result of such a fact would leave the sinful guiltless and make the sinless guilty. On such a possibility guilt has no necessary connection with sin: there is no such possibility. And the substitution of Christ in suffering will satisfy all the requirements of the redemptive economy.

Nor have the vicarious sufferings of Christ, without the penal element, less value for any legitimate purpose or attainable end of substitutional atonement. Such an atonement has great ends in the manifestation of the divine holiness, justice, and love; of the evil of sin, and the certainty of penalty, except as forgiveness may be obtained in the grace of redemption. But for all such ends the theory of vicarious punishment has no advantage above that of vicarious suffering.

If the high assertion be true, that God is under obli-

¹ Dr. Whedon: "Bibliotheca Sacra," vol. xix, p. 252; also, "Commentary," 2 Cor. 5: 21.

gation to punish sin as it deserves, and solely on the ground of its demerit, then there is a requirement of justice not fulfilled by vicarious suffering in atonement. But no more is it in the alleged mode of substitutional punishment; and for reasons previously given.¹ Imputation carried over no sin to Christ. Hence no sin was punished when he suffered.

The punishment of sin does manifest the divine holiness and justice. But this fact gives no advantage to the scheme of substitutional punishment; and for the reason that sin is not punished in Christ. If he is punished, it is in absolute freedom from all demerit of sin. And the recoil of so many minds from such a fact, as one of injustice, is not without reason.

Punishment does declare the evil of sin and the certainty of penalty; but only on the condition that the penal infliction fall upon the demerit of sin. But here, again, the scheme of Satisfaction is denied all advantage, because, according to its own admissions, such is not the fact. And the substitution of Christ in suffering, as the only and necessary ground of forgiveness, will answer for these great ends as fully as such alleged substitution in punishment.

A ground of forgiveness provided in a divine sacrifice infinitely great is a marvelous manifestation of the divine love; but that sacrifice, in every admissible or possible element, is as great in the mode of vicarious suffering as in that of vicarious punishment. The gift of the Father is the same. Nor are the sufferings of the Son less, or other, in any possible element. In

¹ Chap. vii, V, 10

neither case could there be any remorse or sense of personal demerit. He could have no sense of the divine wrath against himself. Nor could there be such a divine wrath. The scheme of Satisfaction will so deny. It would repel any accusation that even by implication it attributes to the Father any wrathful bearing toward the Son. "Christ was at no time the object of his Father's personal displeasure, but suffered only the signs—the *effect*, not the *affection*—of divine anger."¹ The incarnation, the self-divestment of a rightful glory in equality with the Father, the assumption, instead, of the form of a servant in the likeness of men, are all the same on the one theory as on the other. There is the same infinite depth of condescension. Equal sorrow and agony force the earnest prayer and bloody sweat in Gethsemane, and the bitter outcry on Calvary.

Any question, therefore, between these two theories respecting the sufferings of Christ, concerns their nature, and not either their measure or redemptive office. And in these facts—in the divine compassion which embraced a perishing world, in the infinite sacrifice of that compassion, in the gracious purpose and provision of that sacrifice—is the manifestation of the divine love. "Herein is love." "God so loved the world." And to call his sufferings penal—or had they been so in fact—would add nothing either to the measure or manifestation of the divine love in human redemption.

Yet, without the penal element in the sufferings of

¹ Prof. Bruce: "The Humiliation of Christ," p. 381.

Christ, we may attribute to them a peculiar depth and tone arising out of their relation to sin in their redemptive office, and find the explanation in the facts of psychology. It is no presumption so to apply such facts. The human nature was present as a constituent element in the person of Christ. And there is no more reason to deny its influence upon his consciousness than to deny such influence to his divine nature. So far, therefore, as his consciousness shared in experiences through the human nature, they would be kindred to our own.

We have our own experiences in the clear apprehension of justice, and sin, and penalty. The feelings hence arising would be far deeper on hearing a verdict of guilt and judgment pronounced upon the criminal. The higher and purer our spiritual nature, still the deeper would these feelings be. And could one with the highest attainable moral perfection redeem a criminal simply by vicarious suffering, his inevitable contact with sin, in the realizations of a most vivid apprehension of its demerit and punishment, would give a peculiar cast and depth to his sufferings.

So was it in the redemptive sufferings of Christ, but in an infinitely deeper sense. In such redemption he must have had in clearest view the divine holiness, and justice, and wrath; the turpitude and demerit of sin; and the terribleness of its merited penalty. Only in such a view could he comprehend his own work or sacrifice in atonement for sin. And, remembering the moral perfection of his nature, and that his contact was with the sins of all men in the full apprehension of their demerit, of the divine wrath against them, of the terri-

bleness of their just doom, and that his own blood and life, in the conscious purpose of their offering, were a sacrifice in atonement for all, we have reason enough for their peculiar tone and awful depth.

It is urged that penal substitution is necessary, not only for the satisfaction of justice, but also "for satisfying the demands of a guilty conscience, which mere pardon never can appease."¹ The connection holds the Rectoral atonement to be as powerless as the Moral scheme for the contentment of conscience. It cannot have rest, except with the merited punishment of sin. Therefore, in the case of forgiveness, such punishment must be endured by a substitute.

We fully accept the fact of a deep sense of punitive demerit on account of sin in a truly awakened conscience. This feeling may be so strong as to result in a desire for punishment. There may even be some relief of conscience from the penal endurance. But such a feeling has respect simply to personal demerit, and can be appeased only through personal punishment—if punishment be really necessary to the appeasement.

What is the law of pacification in substitutional punishment? We know not any. Nor can there be any, except such punishment be in relief of personal character. But this will not be claimed as possible. Further, it is claimed in behalf of atonement by penal substitution, that, more than any thing else, it deepens the sense of sin and personal demerit. But if its tendency is to the very state of mind involving the deepest un-

¹ Dr. Hodge: "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, p. 526. See also Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," pp. 298, 299.

rest, it is impossible to see how it can be necessary to the pacification of the conscience. And if we can find rest only through merited punishment, personal or vicarious, we shall never find it either in this world or in the next.

All relief from the trouble and disquietude arising in the sense of sin and guilt, must come in the forgiveness of sin. And to be complete, the forgiveness must be so full and gracious as to draw the soul into a restful assurance of the loving favor of the forgiving Father. It is no discredit to infinite grace to say, that the sense of demerit for sins committed can never be eradicated, not even in heaven; though the remorse of sin may be taken away here and now. But even such a sense of demerit tends to a measure of unrest forever, and, apart from every other law, would so result. There is still a law of complete rest—such as we have just given. The true rest will come in a full forgiveness, in the assurances of the divine friendship and love, and in a grateful, joyous love answering to the infinite grace of salvation. And the atonement in vicarious suffering answers for such facts as fully as that in penal substitution.

Nor has the atonement in vicarious suffering any tendency or liability to Antinomianism. From its own nature it is a provisory or conditional ground, not a causal ground of forgiveness and salvation. From such an atonement no license to sin can be legitimately taken. Antinomianism is utterly outlawed. We know very well that Satisfactionists very generally discard this heresy. They will deny that it has any logical connection with their theory. Yet in the his-

tory of doctrines Antinomianism stands with the soteriology of Satisfaction. Nor does it seem remote from a logical sequence to such an atonement. There is substituted punishment, and also substituted righteousness. Whatever penalty we deserve Christ bears; whatever obedience we lack he fulfills. He takes our place under both penalty and precept. What he does and suffers in our stead answer for us in the requirements of justice and law as though personally our own. In view of such facts, Antinomianism is far worse in its doctrine than in its logic. But the atonement in Christ does not make void the law. Nor has the true doctrine any liability to such a perversion. The atonement in vicarious suffering has this advantage, and is thereby commended as the true one.

4. *The Grotian Theory*.—The theory of atonement now under discussion is often called the Edwardean, and also the New England, theory. It has the former title from the younger Edwards, who contributed much, and among the first, to its American formation. Some find, or think they find, its seed-thoughts in the writings of the elder Edwards, and hence so style it. But Satisfactionists deny this source, and earnestly disclaim for him all responsibility for the doctrine.¹ It is called the New England theory because specially elaborated by leading New England divines

¹ Prof. Smeaton: "The Apostles' Doctrine of Atonement," p. 536.

² "The Atonement. Discourses and Treatises by Edwards, Smealley, Maxcy, Emmons, Griffin, Burge, and Weeks." With an Introductory Essay by Edwards A. Park. In this large volume Prof. Park has collected the best New England literature on this subject. His own Introductory Essay adds much to the value of the book.

But priority and the true originality are with Grotius. Nor can we accord to these very learned and able divines an independent origination of the doctrine. They could not have been ignorant of the work of Grotius, nor that in the deeper principles they were at one with him. With differences respecting many points, there is yet such an agreement.¹

By common consent, and quite irrespective of all dissent from him in doctrine, Grotius was a man of very extraordinary ability and learned attainment. The literary achievements of his youth are a wonder.² Nor did his mature life falsify the promise of such marvelous precocity. His great abilities and vast learning gave him eminence in science, in philosophy, in statesmanship, in law, in theology. He wrote many books, but to only one of which have we any occasion for reference.

In theology he was an Arminian, and at a time when he, with many others, suffered no little persecution. But all the tendencies of his mind, as well as the logic of his reason, gave him preference for this system as in comparison with the Calvinism of Gomarus or the Synod of Dort. There was no narrowness in the cast of his soul. On all great questions his views were at once broad and profound. On the rights of conscience, and of religious and political freedom, he was very far in advance of his time. "And, indeed, the Arminian doctrine, which, discarding the Calvinistic dogma of abso-

¹ W. F. Warren, D.D.: "The Edwardean Theory of Atonement," *Methodist Quarterly Review*, July, 1860.

² "New American Cyclopædia," 1859, Art. Grotius.

lute predestination, teaches that man is free to accept or to refuse grace, could not fail to suit a mind such as that of Grotius."¹ Yet he was no latitudinarian; nor was his theology a matter of mere sentiment. It was the fruit of profound study. And the more protracted and the profounder his study the more thorough was his Arminianism.

Grotius held firmly the fact of an atonement in Christ. In this faith he undertook its discussion, having in special view its defense against the assumptions and objections of the Socinian scheme. Such is the import of the title which he gave to his work.² It is not clear that he began the discussion with full forecast of the outcome. He probably had no new theory previously constructed or even outlined in thought. On the authority of Scripture he was sure of an atonement in the blood of Christ. He was sure, therefore, of the error of the Socinian scheme, and of the fallacy of its objections against this fact. But in its defense he opened his own way to the new theory ever since rightfully connected with his name.

It is rarely the case that the originator of a new theory, especially in a sphere of profound and broadly related doctrinal truth, clears it of all alien elements, or achieves completeness in scientific construction. Such, on this subject, is the fact with Anselm. It is also true of Grotius. We do not, therefore, accept all

¹ M'Clintock & Strong: "Cyclopædia," vol. iii, p. 1017.

² "Defensio Fidei Catholicæ de Satisfactione Christi Adversus F. Socinum." Translated by the Rev. Frank A. Foster, in "Bibliotheca Sacra," January and April, 1879.

his positions. Some are not essential to his doctrine. In others he is not entirely self-consistent. We accept what really constitutes his theory, and have little concern for any thing else. He had an equal right with Anselm to construct a doctrine of atonement, and achieved a higher scientific result. Hence the history of doctrines records less modification in his theory than in the Anselmic. We have no occasion either closely to review or to defend him. This would only anticipate much of the discussion assigned to the present chapter. It would be easy to recite reviews from various authors, and to give references to many others. But their very commonness to discussions of the atonement renders this unnecessary. Yet a few references will follow; and we here give a summary statement of his doctrinal position.

“The fundamental error of the Socinian view was found by Grotius to be this: that Socinus regarded God, in the work of redemption, as holding the place merely of a creditor, or master, whose simple will was a sufficient discharge from the existing obligation. But, as we have in the subject before us to deal with punishment and the remission of punishment, God cannot be looked upon as a creditor, or an injured party, since the act of inflicting punishment does not belong to an injured party as such. The right to punish is not one of the rights of an absolute master or of a creditor, these being merely personal in their character; it is the right of a ruler only. Hence God must be considered as a ruler, and the right to punish belongs to the ruler as such, since it exists, not for the punisher’s sake, but for

the sake of the commonwealth, to maintain its order and to promote the public good.”¹

The passage just cited is a very free rendering of the original of Grotius, yet sufficing for the leading ideas. It is given as opening up, especially by the logic of its principles, his theory of atonement. It has not entire acceptability. Respecting the right to punish sin as purely a rectoral one, the principle may apply to man, but not to God. He has such a personal right. If Grotius allows an inference to the contrary, so far we think him in error. The case of forgiveness is different; and it is correct to say that God may not forgive sin irrespective of the interests of his moral government. This is a vital principle in the Governmental theory. It is the ground on which Grotius maintains the necessity for an atonement, and defends it against the objections of Socinianism.

Nor did he hold any doubtful view respecting either the intrinsic evil of sin or the imperative office of penalty. Sin deserves eternal penalty, and the penalty may not be remitted, except on rectorally sufficient ground. Thus, after setting forth the reasons for punishment, he says: “God has, therefore, most weighty reasons for punishing, especially if we are permitted to estimate the magnitude and multitude of sins. But because, among all his attributes, love of the human race is pre-eminent, God was willing, though he could have justly punished all men with deserved and legiti-

¹ “*Bibliotheca Sacra*,” vol. ix, p. 259. The citation is from a mainly satisfactory review of the Grotian theory by Baur, in a translation by Rev. Leonard Swain.

mate punishment, that is, with eternal death—and had reasons for so doing—to spare those who believe in Christ. But, since we must be spared either by setting forth, or not setting forth, some example against so many great sins, in his most perfect wisdom he chose that way by which he could manifest more of his attributes at once, viz., both clemency and severity, or his hate of sin and care for the preservation of his law.”¹ In these views, while essentially divergent from the theory of Satisfaction, he is thoroughly valid and conclusive against Socinianism.

While thus asserting the intrinsic evil of sin, Grotius denies an absolute necessity arising therefrom for its punishment. The punishment of sin is just, but not in itself an obligation. The intrinsic evil of sin renders its penal retribution just, but not a requirement of judicial rectitude. Threatened penalty, unless marked by irrevocability, is not absolute. A threat differs from a promise. The latter conveys a right and takes on obligation; the former does not.²

In this sense he regarded the divine law as positive, and its penalty as remissible. The law, in precept and penalty, is a divine enactment; in execution, a divine act. The execution is not a judicial obligation, except for rectoral ends.

And this is the permissible relaxation of law which Grotius maintains. There is such a relaxation, as there is reality in the divine forgiveness of sin. Nor have

Translation in “*Bibliotheca Sacra*,” vol. xxxvi, p. 287.

² “*Bibliotheca Sacra*,” vol. xxxvi, pp. 153–155; Dr. Dale: “*The Atonement*,” p. 296.

Satisfactionists any consistent ground for its denial, nor any sufficient reason for their adverse criticism of Grotius on this account. By their own concession that sin, with its demerit, is not and cannot be transferred to Christ, they admit by inevitable logical sequence that it is not punished in him, and hence, that the law in its penalty is relaxed in every instance of non-execution upon the actual sinner.

Holding thus the remissibility of penalty so far as the demerit of sin is concerned, Grotius, as previously noted, maintains, with its justice, its profound importance in the interest of moral government. Forgiveness too freely granted, or too often repeated, and especially on slight grounds, would annul the authority of the law, or render it powerless for its great and imperative rectoral ends. Thus he finds the necessity for an atonement—for some vicarious provision—which, on the remission of penalty, may conserve these ends. Such a provision he finds in the death of Christ, set forth as a penal example. So he styles it. And he makes a very free use of the terms of penal substitution. Yet he does not seem to regard the sufferings of Christ as penal in any very strict sense—certainly not as a substitutional punishment of sin in the satisfaction of a purely retributive justice. Such an example he regards as at once a manifestation of the goodness and severity of God, of the odiousness of sin, and a deterrent from its commission.

Thus his theory of atonement accords with his view of punishment and its remission. These are rectoral rather than personal acts. So the atonement, taking

the place of penalty in its rectoral ends, regards God in his administration rather than in his personal character or absolute retributive justice. And thus he grounds the atonement in the principles which properly constitute the Governmental theory.

The *Acceptilatio* of Duns Scotus is very freely charged upon Grotius, especially by Satisfactionists. Even Dr. Pope, though an Arminian, is consenting thereto in his late work on theology.¹ Bauer joins in the accusation in the article previously given by reference; though he does not withhold the fact that Grotius himself formally rejected the principle. This he certainly did, and denied that *acceptilatio* could have any place with the punishment of sin. Repelling this accusation as brought by Socinus against the atonement, he says: "For, in the first place, this word may be applied, even when no payment precedes, to the right over a thing loaned, but is not, and cannot be, applied to punishment. We nowhere read that indulgence of crimes was called by the ancients *acceptilatio*. For that is said to be accepted which can be accepted. The ruler properly exacts corporal punishment, but does not accept it; because from punishment nothing properly comes to him."² It is as a logical implication that Bauer makes the charge. But Grotius certainly understood the question, and the logic of its facts and principles, as thoroughly as his reviewer. We join issue, and deny that *Acceptilatio* is in any logical sense consequent to the theory

¹ "Christian Theology," p. 412.

² Translation in "Bibliotheca Sacra," vol. xxxvi, p. 298.

of Grotius; while we affirm its close affinity with that of Anselm.

Leading divines of the Church—Abelard, Bernard, Peter Lombard, Duns Scotus, and others—contemporaries of Anselm, or his close followers in time, were not all close followers of his “*Cur Deus Homo*.” Some diverged so widely as to propound really new theories. But Duns Scotus, the heretical Acceptilationist, really propounded no new theory in kind. He dissented from Anselm, not respecting the nature of an atonement in the meritorious obedience and suffering of Christ, and in satisfaction or payment of a divine claim—a claim arising out of the wrong which God had suffered on account of sin,—not on these determining facts, but respecting the amount of the debt and the relative value of the payment. With Anselm, the debt was infinite; with Duns, not strictly infinite. With the former, the payment was in full; with the latter, only in part; which, however, God graciously accepted in lieu of the whole, his acceptance also giving value to the sum paid. This is the Acceptilatio of Duns Scotus, as known in historical theology.¹ His divergence was specially from a difference in Christology, or respecting the redemptive sufferings of Christ. With Anselm, his sufferings as the God-Man were of infinite value and therefore a payment in full; while with Duns they were strictly limited to his human nature, and, therefore, of finite value, and a payment only in part. But he all the while adheres to the same atonement in kind—atonement by payment toward the satisfaction of a

¹ Hagenbach: “History of Doctrines,” vol. ii, pp. 39, 44.

divine claim. This is proof that his Acceptilatio has a close affinity for the theory of Anselm.

It is only with such a theory that it can have any affinity. It is grounded in the ideas of debt and payment. There must be a divine claim payable in meritorious obedience and suffering. Whatever is paid must go to the account in claim. This is Acceptilation. These ideas of debt and payment have the utmost currency in the Anselmic theory—in the Satisfaction theory.

But Grotius held no theory of sin and penalty, and no theory of atonement, which admits any such sense of debt and payment. His adverse critics clearly prove that he did not. And as he formally denied Acceptilation, and the very possibility of it in the case of penalty for sin, so the principles of his doctrine of atonement deny for him all the ideas of debt and payment—and in part as in whole—without which it has no place.

Mr. Watson, while freely citing Grotius as an authority, accuses him of unduly leaning to that view of the atonement which regards it “as a merely *wise* and *fit expedient* of government.”¹ He probably had specially in view this passage in Grotius: “It becomes us only to make this preliminary remark—that Socinus is not right in postulating that we must assign a cause which shall prove that God could not have acted otherwise. For such a cause is not required in those things which God does freely. But he who will maintain that this was a free action may refer to Augustine, who

¹ “Theological Institutes,” vol. ii, p. 139.

declares, not that God had no other possible way of liberating us, but that there was no other more appropriate way for healing our misery, neither could be. But also, before Augustine, Athanasius had said : 'God was able by a mere utterance to annul the curse without coming himself at all. But it is necessary to consider what is useful to men, and not always what is possible to God.' Nazarius says : 'It was possible for God even without the incarnation (of Christ) to save us by his mere volition.' Bernard : 'Who does not know that the Almighty had at hand various methods for our redemption, justification, liberation? But this does not detract from the efficacy of that method which he has selected out of many.'"¹

We do not understand Grotius to indorse all these citations, though from authors so eminent. If he did, we certainly could not follow him. And his doctrine of atonement has a far deeper sense than that of a dispensable expedient of government. His position here is, that of the divine freedom in the particular manner of human redemption, within the limit of a sufficient redemption. A distinction may properly be here made. Only a divine person could redeem the world; and the redemption could be effected only by a great personal sacrifice. The necessity is from the office which the atonement must fulfill. But, with the profoundest conviction of truth in these facts, we should greatly hesitate to say—indeed, we do not believe—that in the resources of infinite wisdom the precise manner of the mediation of Christ was the only possible manner of

¹ Translation in "Bibliotheca Sacra," vol. xxxvi, p. 285.

human redemption. We are not sure that Grotius means any thing more.

5. *The Consistent Arminian Theory.*—In the reference to Arminianism we include the Wesleyan school, and take the position of consistency with special reference to it.

Wesleyan Arminianism has ever been true to the fact of an atonement in Christ. In her hymns and prayers, in her utterances of a living Christian experience, in her sermons and exhortations, this great fact ever receives the fullest recognition. In her soteriology "Christ is all and in all."¹ In the fullness and constancy of her faith in the reality and necessity of an atonement in Christ, Wesleyan Methodism has no reason to shun any comparison with the most orthodox soteriology.

What is our doctrine of atonement? The answer to this question is not so simple or unperplexed as many, at first thought, would suppose. The Scripture terms of atonement have, with all propriety, been in the freest use with us. Nor have we been careful to shun the terminology of the strictest doctrine of Satisfaction. An inquiry for the ideas associated with these terms in the popular thought of Methodism respecting the nature of the atonement, would probably bring no very definite answer. In view of all the facts, we are constrained to think that the dominant idea has been, that of a real and necessary atonement in Christ, while the idea of its nature has been rather indefinite. We are very sure, that while the popular faith of Methodism

¹ Col. 3:11.

has utterly excluded the Socinian scheme, it has not been at one with the theory of Satisfaction.

Our earlier written soteriology has, at least in part, a like indefiniteness. It is always clear and pronounced on the fact of an atonement, but not always exact or definite respecting its nature. This, however, should be noted, that our written soteriology contains comparatively but little directly on this question. Indeed, we have not contributed much to the literature of the atonement. And most of the little contributed has been given to the two questions of reality and extent, while only the smaller part has been given to the nature or doctrine of the atonement.

Mr. Watson has written more fully and formally on the atonement than any other Methodist author.¹ We recognize his superior ability as a theologian. This ability is not wanting in his discussion of the atonement. But his strength is given to the questions of its reality and extent. His discussion is mainly a polemics with the Socinian scheme and with Calvinistic limitationists. With rare ability he maintains the fact of an atonement against the one, and its universality against the others. But on the question of theories we cannot accord to him any very clear discrimination. Grotius, as it appears, was his chief authority; and next to him, Stillingfleet, who wrote mainly in defense of Grotius.² But Grotius, while giving the principles of a new theory, did not, as previously noted, give to its construction scientific completeness. He wrote from the

¹ "Theological Institutes," vol. ii, chapters **xix-xxix**.

² "Works," vol. iii, p. 227.

stand-point of the Reformed doctrine, but with such new principles as really constitute another doctrine. But clear and determining as his principles are, he failed to give either theory in scientific completeness. This is just what Mr. Watson has failed to do. And he is less definite than Grotius himself.

He rejects the doctrine of Satisfaction in its usual exposition, and requires for its acceptance such modifications as it cannot admit. He interprets Satisfaction much in the manner of Grotius, and hence in a sense which the Reformed doctrine must reject. And the doctrine which he arraigns and refutes as the Antinomian atonement, is the historic and current Calvinian doctrine of Satisfaction, with the formal rejection of its Antinomian sequences. He is, therefore, not a Satisfactionist.¹

The principles of moral government in which Mr. Watson grounds the necessity for an atonement mainly determine for him the Governmental theory.² The same is true of his discussion of the "*vinculum*" between the sufferings of Christ and the forgiveness of sin?³ And when we add his broader views in soteriology as including the universality of the atonement, its strictly provisory character, and the real conditionality of its saving grace—views necessarily belonging to all consistent Arminian theology, and which Mr. Watson so fully maintained—his principles require for him the Governmental theory of atonement. And the more certainly is this so, as it is impossible to construct

¹ "Theological Institutes," vol. ii, pp. 138-143.

² Ibid., pp. 87-102.

³ Ibid., pp. 143-145.

any new doctrine of a real atonement between this and the Satisfaction theory.

So far as we know, Dr. Whedon has never given his theory of atonement in the style of the Governmental; yet it is in principle the same. In his statement of the doctrines of Methodism it is given thus: "Christ as truly died as a substitute for the sinner, as Damon could have died as a substitute for Pythias. Yet to make the parallel complete, Damon should so die for Pythias as that, unless Pythias should accept the substitution of Damon in all its conditions, he should not receive its benefits, and Damon's death should be for him in vain; Pythias may be as rightfully executed as if Damon had not died. If the sinner accept not the atonement, but deny the Lord that bought him, Christ has died for him in vain; he perishes for whom Christ died. If the whole human race were to reject the atonement, the atonement would be a demonstration of the righteousness and goodness of God, but would be productive of aggravation of human guilt rather than of salvation from it. The imputation of the sin of man, or his punishment, to Christ, is but a popular conception, justifiable, if understood as only conceptual; just as we might say that Damon was *punished* instead of Pythias. In strictness of language and thought, neither crime, guilt, nor punishment is personally transferable."¹

Any one at all familiar with theories of atonement will see at a glance that the principles contained in this

¹ "Bibliotheca Sacra," vol. xix, pp. 260, 261. Dr. Whedon gives the same views in his very able sermon on "Substitutional Atonement."

statement are thoroughly exclusive of the Satisfaction theory, and that they have a true scientific position only with the Rectoral theory. The same is true of the doctrine, and with much fuller unfolding, in the sermon to which reference is given.

On the theory of atonement we understand Dr. Raymond to be with Dr. Whedon. He gives the atonement thus: "The death of Christ is not a substituted penalty, but a substitute for a penalty. The necessity of an atonement is not found in the fact that the justice of God requires an invariable execution of deserved penalty, but in the fact that the honor and glory of God, and the welfare of his creatures, require that his essential and rectoral righteousness be adequately declared. The death of Christ is exponential of divine justice, and is a satisfaction in that sense, and not in the sense that it is, as of a debt, the full and complete payment of all its demands."¹

The principles given in this passage exclude the Satisfaction atonement, and require as their only scientific position the Rectoral theory. All this is even more apparent when the passage cited is interpreted in the light of the further references given.

With this view Dr. Raymond's doctrine of justification, as that of every consistent Arminian, fully accords. It is not a discharge of the sinner through the merited punishment of his sin in his substitute, but an actual forgiveness, and such as can issue only in the non-execution of penalty.²

¹ "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, pp. 257, 258. See also pp. 261, 264-268.

² Ibid., vol. ii, p. 258.

We would not place Dr. Raymond in any false light, nor identify him with any theory which he discards. He does discard the theory which represents the death of Christ simply as a governmental display, and especially as implying that this is only one of several possible expedients in atonement. While fully maintaining the rectoral office of the atonement, he regards the death of Christ as also a manifestation of the righteousness of God.¹ But these two facts we think very closely, indeed inseparably, united. Without the manifestation of the divine righteousness, the atonement in the death of Christ could not fulfill its rectoral office. But it is not the Governmental theory, in any true statement of it, that is here criticised. And on its own principles the theory requires the redemptive mediation of Christ as the only adequate atonement.

The principles and office of the atonement in Christ, as maintained by Dr. Bledsoe, agree with the Governmental theory. This will be clear to any one who will read with scientific discrimination his discussion of the question.² And with Arminians he is, rightfully, a representative author on questions of this kind. He had both the learning and the ability for the discussion of Methodist doctrines. He gave to them profound study, and had a deep insight into their philosophy. The same is true respecting the atonement. He studied it in the light of the Scriptures and in its scientific relations to other cardinal doctrines of Wesleyan Arminianism. The outcome is a doctrine intrinsically the same as

¹ "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, p. 253.

² "Theodicy," pp. 276-293.

we propound, though not so styled. On the ground of such a doctrine it is easy to answer the Socinian objections arrayed against the fact of an atonement in the death of Christ: objections which the theory of Satisfaction never has answered, and never can.

The soteriology of Wesleyan Arminianism, taken as a whole, excludes the Satisfaction theory, and requires the Governmental as the only theory consistent with its doctrines. The doctrines of soteriology, with the atonement included, must admit of systemization, and be in scientific accord. If not, there is error at some point, as no truth can be in discord with any other truth.¹ Now certain cardinal doctrines of the Wesleyan soteriology are very conspicuous and entirely settled. One is, that the atonement is only provisory in its character; that it renders men salvable, but does not necessarily save them. Another, and the consequence of the former, is the conditionality of salvation. Nor is this such as Calvinism often asserts, yet holds with the monergism of the system, but a real conditionality in accord with the synergism of the truest Arminianism. On these facts there is neither hesitation nor divergence in Methodism. With these facts, the atonement of Satisfaction must be excluded from her system of doctrines, and the Rectoral theory maintained as the only doctrine of a real atonement agreeing with them.

Such has really been the position of Arminianism from the beginning, though without exact or definitive statement. It never occupied the position of Luther

¹ Chapter i, 10.

anism in maintaining a doctrine of atonement which, with its universality, must save all men, and which is disproved by the fact that many are not saved. While the earlier Arminians never formally constructed a doctrine of atonement in scientific accord with their system; yet from the beginning they denied the leading facts of the Reformed soteriology, so vitally connected with the atonement of Satisfaction. Thus they denied its limitation to an elect part; that it is necessarily saving; that it includes its own application; that saving faith is a resistless product of its sovereign grace; that the application is in the full extent of the redemption.¹ Indeed, these questions were the chief issue in the great polemics between the Arminians and the Calvinists. Hence the former could not consistently hold the doctrine maintained by the latter.

On these same questions, so directly concerning the atonement and so decisive of its nature, Wesleyan Methodism has ever been most thoroughly Arminian. And there is thus determined for her the Rectoral theory as the only doctrine of a real atonement consistent with her soteriology.

II.

PUBLIC JUSTICE.

We have previously treated justice in its distinctions as commutative, distributive, punitive—the last being a special phase of the distributive. We also named public justice, but deferred it for discussion in connec-

¹ Dr. Schaff: "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i, pp. 516–518; Frederick Calder: "Memoirs of Episcopius," p. 474; Professor Smeaton: "Apostles' Doctrine of Atonement," pp. 537, 538.

tion with the Rectoral theory of atonement. We have now reached the proper place for its treatment.

1. *Relation to Atonement.*—Any theory of atonement embodying enough truth to be really a theory must take special account of divine justice. The relation between the two is most intimate; so intimate, indeed, that the view taken of justice must be determinative of the theory of atonement. This we found to be true of the theory of Satisfaction. It is not only in accord with the principles of justice asserted in connection with it, but is imperatively required by them. They will admit no other doctrine. If justice must punish sin simply for the reason of its demerit, penal substitution is the only possible atonement. So the Governmental theory must be consistent with the doctrine of justice maintained in connection with it; and, to be true, must accord with justice as a divine attribute, and in all its relations to sin and to the ends of moral government.

As in the Satisfaction theory, so in the Rectoral, the sufferings of Christ are an atonement for sin only as in some sense they take the place of penalty. But they do not replace penalty in the same sense in the schemes. In the one they take its place as a penal substitute, thus realizing the office of justice in the actual punishment of sin; in the other they take its place in the fulfillment of its office as concerned with the interests of moral government. It is the office of justice to maintain these interests through the means of penalty. Therefore, atonement in the mediation of Christ must so take the place of

penalty as to fulfill this same office, while the penalty is remitted.

Such being the office of atonement in the Governmental theory, it is clear that for a proper exposition of the doctrine we require an exact and discriminating statement of public justice, or of penalty as the means of justice for the conservation of moral government. We shall thus secure a right construction of the doctrine, and, also, obviate certain objections which have no validity against the doctrine itself, whatever force they may have against defective forms of it. No ground will remain for objecting either that the theory makes light of the demerit of sin, or that it transforms justice into mere benevolence, or that it regards the substitution of Christ in suffering as a mere expedient, in place of which some other provision would answer as well.

2. *One with Divine Justice.*—Public justice is not a distinct kind of justice; not other than divine justice. It is divine justice in moral administration. God is moral Ruler only as he has moral subjects. Therefore, in the eternity antecedent to their creation he existed without any rectoral office of justice. Their creation gave him no new attribute, though it brought him into new relations. In these new relations to moral beings his justice, an essential and eternal attribute of his nature, found its proper office in moral government. In the fulfillment of this office it rules through the means of reward and penalty. So, in the moral system, public justice is the one divine justice in moral administration.

3. *One with Distributive Justice.*—In principle public

justice is one with distributive justice. Subjects differ in moral character. Some are obedient to the law of duty; others, disobedient. This makes a difference in character. The difference is real and intrinsic. So the law of God discriminates the two classes. And in this our moral reason is in full consent with the divine law. In the profoundest convictions of our moral consciousness we are assured of the reality of moral obligation, and of an essential ethical difference between obedience and disobedience; and equally, that the former has merit or rewardableness, and the latter, punitive desert. So in moral administration God deals with men according to their conduct, rewarding their obedience, and punishing their sin. The fact does not require exact or full justice in the present state of probation. It is the law of our responsible being. But this, in essential principle and in rectoral office, is simply public justice, or justice in moral administration. All its use of reward and penalty, and for whatever reason or end, is in the view of moral character in the subjects of government. Public justice is, therefore, no law of mere expediency, or of mere expedients; in essential principle and in office it is one with divine justice, one with distributive justice.

4. *Ground of its Penalties.*—Within the realm of the divine government the sole ground of the penalties of administrative or public justice lies in the demerit of sin. The fact is not other, nor in any sense modified by any or all the ulterior ends or utilities of penalty in the interest of moral government. All penal infliction falls upon the demerit of sin as really and restrictedly

as though its punishment were the sole thing in the divine view. This is justice, and this only. Public justice has no other ground for its penalties. Nor may it, except on such ground, inflict any penalty for any ulterior end or interest, however great and urgent. This truth cannot be too deeply emphasized.

We are speaking of divine justice in moral administration. Any thing qualifying the administration of justice in human government arises, in part, from a want of punitive prerogative over the intrinsic demerit of sin; in part, from an inability to know in any given case what the real demerit is. We may infer the guilt from the apparent motive. We cannot search the heart. Hence, in dealing with human conduct, our rightful use of penalty is not really to punish sin as having intrinsic demerit, but to protect society from its injury. The former is the divine prerogative. God searches the heart. He knows all the secret springs and motives of human action. He knows all the sinfulness of such action. It is his sole right to punish it, simply as such. In all the universe, and for any and all purposes, he has nothing but sin to punish.

On this ground public justice is one with distributive justice, one with divine justice; and as wrought into a proper Rectoral atonement even more rigidly adheres to the principle than the purely retributive justice as wrought into the theory of Satisfaction. This theory equally asserts the same principle, but departs from it in the futile attempt to separate guilt from demerit, to carry it over by imputation to Christ, and so to have the merited penalty inflicted upon him, while the sin-

ner and the sin are left behind. This is a real departure from the principle. We may technically distinguish between sin and guilt, taking the former for personal demerit and the latter for answerableness in penalty. We go further, and say that on such distinction there may be personal demerit without guilt—as a soul graciously forgiven still has such demerit but not such guilt. But the converse, that there may be guilt apart from demerit—guilt as an amenability to penalty—does not follow and is not true. Yet it is the very truth of this converse that the scheme of Satisfaction requires as vital to its doctrine of atonement by penal substitution.

We emphasize the principle, that in moral government personal demerit is the only source of guilt, and the only ground of just punishment. If there be any thing valid in the imputation of another's sin, it must transfer the demerit before guilt can arise or the punishment be just. And whatever in the providence of God, whether from the constitution of things or by immediate interposition, transcends the limit of demerit, ceases to be punishment. Without such a principle punishment has no possible rationale.

On this principle all divine penalties, whether executed or only uttered, and in the utterance as in the execution, at once express both the divine justice and the demerit of sin. Hence the execution is not really necessary to that expression. The use and value of the fact will come directly. And we shall find with it a sure basis for the Governmental theory.

5. *End of its Penalties.*—We have not a full exposi-

rary service might be rendered in the latter case, in the divine government, the consequences would be fatal: for here only the loyalty of the heart will answer. This never could be secured by a measure of injustice from which it must revolt. And personal demerit, as the only ground of justice in punishment, is absolutely necessary to all the service of penalty in the interests of moral government. A true doctrine of public justice never departs from this principle.

We thus combine the two elements in the exposition of public justice. Only thus have we a public justice. Omitting the rectoral element, justice is purely retributive, having regard to nothing except the punishment of sin. Omitting the retributive element, justice is injustice. Holding the distinction of justice as retributive and rectoral, and combining the two elements in the one doctrine, we free the question of punishment from the perplexity which its history records.¹ The distinction is valid. There are the two offices of justice. But they must never be separated. Penalty, as a means in the use of justice, has an end beyond the retribution of sin. But, whatever its ulterior end, it is just only as it threatens, or falls upon, demerit. And only thus can it fulfill its high office in the interests of moral government.

It is in the failure first properly to discriminate the two offices of justice in the punishment of sin and the protection of rights, and then to properly combine the two elements in the one doctrine of punishment, that the Rectoral atonement exposes itself to really serious

¹ Cousin: "Psychology," translated by C. S. Henry, pp. 317, 318.

objections, which yet have no validity against a true construction of the theory. And it is against such an erroneous construction that objections are chiefly urged. They are specially urged against it as embodying, or as assumed to embody, that view of justice which makes its strictly rectoral ends the sole account of penalty. "It is on this false principle that the whole governmental theory of atonement is founded. It admits no ground of punishment but the benefit of others."¹ We represent no such a theory. We discard it as fully as Dr. Hodge, or any other advocate of the Satisfaction atonement. Our previous discussions so certify. Hence the objection which the quotation implies is utterly void against the doctrine of atonement, as we construct and maintain it.

It is in the same line of objection that we have cited "a story of an English judge who once said to a criminal, 'You are transported, not because you have stolen those goods, but that goods may not be stolen.'"² We would not defend the propriety of such a delivery. Indeed, we think it very injudicious. A criminal should feel that he deserves the penalty inflicted upon him; otherwise, his punishment can have no tendency toward his amendment. An impression of such desert should also be made upon the public mind, as necessary to the public benefit. But in neither case can the necessary salutary impression be made where all mention of punitive desert is omitted, or where any reference to it is entirely to dismiss it from all connection with the punishment inflicted. Yet there is a deep sense in

¹ Dr. Hodge: "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, p. 579.

² Ibid.

have against the doctrine of others, it has no validity against our own.

6. *Remissibility of its Penalties.*—There is no sufficient reason why sin must be punished solely on the ground of its demerit. The forgiveness of the actual sinner as a real remission of penalty, at the time of his justification and acceptance in the divine favor, is proof positive to the contrary. And, all other ends apart, retributive justice may remit its penalty. It may do this without an atonement. Indeed, it does not admit of an atonement in satisfaction of such remission. It is here, as noticed before, that we part by a fundamental principle with the theory of Satisfaction. It denies the remissibleness of penalty, as due solely to the demerit of sin, on any and all grounds. Hence, it requires for any discharge of the actual sinner a vicarious punishment in full satisfaction of a purely retributive justice. We maintain the proper retributive character of divine justice in all the use of penalty in moral administration; but this retributive element of justice does not bar the remissibility of its penalties. The law of expediency determines the measure of divine penalties within the demerit of sin. And from their ends in the interest of moral government, they are remissible on such ground, but only on such ground, as will equally secure these ends. This principle is fundamental with us, and determinative of our theory of atonement. But our previous discussion of the question respecting the remissibility of divine penalty supersedes the requirement of further treatment here.¹

¹ Note to chap. vii, V, 6.

7. *Place for Atonement.*—Thus the way is open for some substitutional provision which may replace the actual infliction of penalty upon sin. The theory of Satisfaction, as we have seen, really leaves no place for vicarious atonement. Its most fundamental and ever-asserted principle, that sin as such must be punished, makes the punishment of the actual sinner an absolute necessity. Its own admission, and maintenance even, that sin as a personal demerit is untransferable, has this inevitable logical sequence. Nor is there any escape through a technical distinction between demerit and guilt, and an alleged transference of the latter to Christ as a sufficient ground for the just punishment of sin in him. The sin, with all its demerit, and all, therefore, that is punishable, is still left behind with the sinner himself. This fact thoroughly blanks all attempt so to escape. And the scheme of Satisfaction is inseparably bound with the logical consequence, that if sin, as such, must be punished, then it must be punished, and can only be punished, in the actual sinner. But as penalties are remissible so far as a purely retributive justice is concerned; so, having a special end in the interest of moral government, they may give place to any substitutional measure equally securing that end. Here is a place for vicarious atonement.

8. *Nature of Atonement Determined.*—The nature of the atonement in the sufferings of Christ follows necessarily from the above principles. It cannot be in the nature required by the principles of the Satisfaction scheme. In asserting the absoluteness of divine justice in its purely retributive element, the theory excludes

have previously shown that there is no such necessity. We have maintained a punitive disposition in God, but we also find in him a compassion for the very sinners whom his justice so condemns. And we may as reasonably conclude that his disposition of clemency will find its satisfaction in a gratuitous forgiveness of all as that he will not forgive any, except on the equivalent punishment of a substitute. Who can show that the punitive disposition is the stronger? We challenge the presentation of a fact in its expression that shall parallel the cross in expression of the disposition of mercy. And, with no absolute necessity for the punishment of sin, it seems clear that but for the requirements of rectoral justice, compassion would triumph over the disposition of a purely retributive justice. Hence this alleged absolute necessity for an atonement is really no necessity at all.

What is the necessity in the Governmental theory? It is such as arises in the rightful honor and authority of the divine Ruler, and in the rights and interests of moral beings under him. The free remission of sins without an atonement would be their surrender. Hence divine justice itself, still having all its punitive disposition, but infinitely more concerned for these rights and interests than in the mere retribution of sin, must interpose all its authority in bar of a mere administrative forgiveness. The divine holiness and goodness, infinitely concerned for these great ends, must equally bar a forgiveness in their surrender. The divine justice, holiness, and love must, therefore, combine in the

¹ Chap. vii, V, 3, 4, 5, 6.

imperative requirement of an atonement in Christ as the necessary ground of forgiveness. These facts ground it in the deepest necessity.

The rectoral ends of moral government are a pro-founder imperative with justice itself than the retribution of sin, simply as such. One stands before the law in the demerit of crime. His demerit renders his punishment just, though not a necessity. But the protection of others, who would suffer wrong through his impunity, makes his punishment an obligation of judicial rectitude. The same principles are valid in the divine government. The demerit of sin imposes no obligation of punishment upon the divine Ruler; but the protection of rights and interests, by means of merited penalty, is a necessity of his judicial rectitude, except as that protection can be secured through some other means. It is true, therefore, that the Rectoral atonement is grounded in the deepest necessity.

3. *Rectoral Value of Penalty.*—We have sufficiently distinguished between the purely retributive and the rectoral offices of penalty. The former respects simply the demerit of sin; the latter, the great ends to be attained through the ministry of justice and law. As the demerit of sin is the only thing justly punishable, and as unjust penalty may not even be legislated, the retributive element always conditions the rectoral office of justice; but the former does not necessarily include the latter. The distinction of these facts is real.

Penal retribution may, therefore, be viewed as a distinct fact, and entirely in itself. As such, it is simply

such, and not from fear of the penal consequences of their violation or neglect.

The same facts have the fullest application to penalty as an element of the divine law. Here its higher rectoral value will be, and can only be, through the higher revelation of God in his moral attributes as ever active in all moral administration. In its simple retributive element, or as an expression merely of the divine wrath against sin, penalty makes its appeal only to an instinctive fear. Therefore, it can govern through nothing else. But this is its very lowest rectoral force. Of course, we speak with respect to quality, not quantity. And however great the amount of such force, the quality is not in the least heightened. Though in such measure as by a moral certainty, or necessitation even, to sway all moral beings, it would still be the lowest governing force. It could still rule only through an instinctive fear or servile dread of punishment. A true moral obedience never could be so secured. There might be the eye-service of slaves, but never the heart-service of sons. Let the common moral consciousness clothe the divine Ruler in an absolute punitive justice, and that justice will hang as a pall of darkness and despair upon the vision of a trembling world. The penalty of such a justice, voiced in the thunders and flashed in the lightnings of Sinai, could have rectoral force only through a servile fear. But God is one. And there is no schism among his attributes, nor isolation of any one. The just One is also holy and good. And justice, as penally retributive, must not be doctrinally isolated, nor made in any case the sole law of divine administra-

tion. In his punitive ministries God is still love; and now, under the Gospel, the thunders of Sinai may never silence the voices of Calvary. Thus as in both his legislative and administrative justice God reveals the fullness and harmony of his moral attributes, and himself as looking out upon moral beings pre-eminently from the mount of love, and as ruling with a view to his own glory and the common good, so does he associate with penalty the highest moral ideas, which find a response in the profoundest facts of our moral nature, and give to penalty its truest, best rectoral force. Now it rules no longer through an instinctive fear, but through the profoundest ideas and motives of the moral reason.

4. *Rectoral Value of Atonement.*—The sufferings of Christ, as a proper substitute for punishment, must fulfill the office of penalty in the obligatory ends of moral government. The manner of fulfillment is determined by the nature of the service. As the salutary rectoral force of penalty, as an element of law, is specially through the moral ideas which it reveals, so the vicarious sufferings of Christ must reveal like moral ideas, and rule through them. Not else can they so take the place of penalty as, on its remission, to fulfill its high rectoral office. Hence the vicarious sufferings of Christ are an atonement for sin, as they reveal God in his justice, holiness, and love; in his regard for his own honor and law; in his concern for the rights and interests of moral beings; in his reprobation of sin as intrinsically evil, and utterly hostile to his own rights and to the welfare of his subjects.

Does the atonement in Christ reveal such truths? We answer, Yes. Nor do we need the impossible penal element of the scheme of Satisfaction for any part of this revelation.

God reveals his profound regard for the sacredness of his law, and for the interests which it conserves, by what he does for their support and protection. In direct legislative and administrative forms he ordains his law, with declarations of its sacredness and authority; embodies in it the weightiest sanctions of reward and penalty; reprobates in severest terms all disregard of its requirements, and all violation of the rights and interests which it would protect; visits upon transgression the fearful penalties of his retributive justice, though always at the sacrifice of his compassion. The absence of such facts would evince an indifference to the great interests concerned; while their presence evinces, in the strongest manner possible to such facts, the divine regard for these interests. These facts, with the moral ideas which they embody, give weight and salutary governing power to the divine law. The omission of the penal element would, without a proper recital substitution, leave the law in utter weakness.

Now let the sacrifice of Christ be substituted for the primary necessity of punishment, and as the sole ground of forgiveness. But we should distinctly note what it replaces in the divine law, and wherein it may modify the divine administration. The law remains, with all its precepts and sanctions. Penalty is not annulled. There is no surrender of the divine honor and authority. Rights and interests are no less sacred, nor guarded

in feebler terms. Sin has the same reprobation; penalty the same imminence and severity respecting all persistent impenitence and unbelief. The whole change in the divine economy is this—that on the sole ground of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, all who repent and believe may be forgiven and saved. This is the divine substitution for the primary necessity of punishment. While, therefore, all the other facts in the divine legislation and administration remain the same, and in unabated expression of truths of the highest rectoral force and value, this divine sacrifice in atonement for sin replaces the lesson of a primary necessity for punishment with its own higher revelation of the same salutary truths; rather, it adds its own higher lesson to that of penalty. As penalty remains in its place, remissible, indeed, on proper conditions, yet certain of execution in all cases of unrepented sin, and, therefore, often executed in fact, the penal sanction of law still proclaims all the rectoral truth which it may utter. Hence the sacrifice of Christ in atonement for sin, and in the declaration of the divine righteousness in forgiveness, is an additional and infinitely higher utterance of the most salutary moral truths.¹ The cross is the highest revelation of all the truths which embody the best moral forces of the divine government.

The atonement in Christ is so original and singular in many of its facts, that it is the more difficult to find in human facts the analogies for its proper illustration. Yet there are facts not without service here.

An eminent lecturer, in a recent discussion of the

¹ Rom. 3: 25, 26.

atonement, has given notoriety to a measure of Bronson Alcott in the government of his school.¹ He substituted his own chastisement for the infliction of penalty upon his offending pupil, receiving the infliction at the hand of the offender. No one can rationally think such a substitution penal, or that the sin of the pupil was expiated by the stripes which the master suffered instead. The substitution answered simply for the disciplinary ends of penalty. Without reference either to the theory of Bronson Alcott, or to the interpretation of Joseph Cook, we so state the case as most obvious in the philosophy of its own facts. Such office it might well fulfill. And we accept the report of the very salutary result, not only as certified by the most reliable authority, but also as intrinsically most credible. No one in the school, and to be ruled by its discipline, could henceforth think less gravely of any offense against its laws. No one could think, either, that the master regarded with lighter reprobation the evil of such offense, or that he was less resolved upon a rigid enforcement of obedience. All these ideas must have been intensified, and in a manner to give them the most healthful influence. The vicarious sacrifice of the master became a potent and most salutary moral element in the government maintained. Even the actual punishment of the offender could not have so secured obedience for the sake of its own obligation and excellence.

Instances have occurred in which an innocent pupil

¹ Joseph Cook: "Boston Monday Lectures:" subject, "Orthodoxy," pp. 156-162.

has given himself as a substitute for a guilty one, and received the stripes penally due the offender. We have here like facts to those in the preceding case, and the same philosophy of them. The disciplinary stripes are not penal to the substitute, as they would have been in their infliction upon the offender. There are wanting all the conditions of a veritable punishment. There is no demerit in the substitute. The law of the school has no penalty for him, and must turn aside from its retributive course to reach him. The master has for him no condemnation, and finds no retributive satisfaction in his vicarious suffering. The substitution, therefore, is not for the punishment of sin, but for the sake of the rectoral ends of penalty. These ends are secured through the moral ideas which the substitution conveys.

We may also instance the case of Zaleucus, very familiar in discussions of atonement, though usually accompanied with such denials of analogy as would render it useless for illustration. It is so useless on the theory of Satisfaction, but valuable on a true theory.

Zaleucus was law-giver and ruler of the Locrians, a Grecian colony early founded in Southern Italy. His laws were severe, and his administration rigid; yet both were well suited to the manners of the people. His own son was convicted for violating a law, the penalty of which was blindness. The case came to Zaleucus both as ruler and father. Hence there was a conflict in his soul. He would have been an unnatural father, and of such a character as to be unfit for a ruler, had he suffered no conflict of feeling. His people en-

treated his clemency for his son. But as a statesman, he knew that the sympathy which prompted such entreaty could be but transient; that in the reaction he would suffer their accusation of partiality and injustice; that his laws would be dishonored and his authority broken. Still there was the conflict of soul. What should he do for the reconciliation of the ruler and the father? In this exigency he devised an atonement by the substitution of one of his own eyes for one of his son's.¹

This was a provision above law and retributive justice. Neither had any penalty for the ruler and father on account of the sin of the son. The substitution, therefore, was not penal. The vicarious suffering was not in any sense retributive. It could not be so. All the conditions of penal retribution were wanting. No one can rationally think that the sin of the son, or any part of it, was expiated by the suffering of the father in his stead. The transference of sin as a whole is unreasonable enough; but the idea of a division of it, a part being left with the actual sinner and punished in him and the other part transferred to a substitute and punished in him, transcends all the capabilities of rational thought.

The substitution, without being penal, did answer for the rectoral office of penalty. The ruler fully protected his own honor and authority. Law still voiced its behests and penalties with unabated force. And the vicarious sacrifice of the ruler upon the altar of his pa-

¹ Warburton: "Divine Legation," vol. i, pp. 180-184; *Anthony's Classical Dictionary*, p. 1402.

rental compassion, and as well upon the altar of his administration, could but intensify all the ideas which might command for him honor and authority as a ruler, or give to his laws a salutary power over his people.

This, therefore, is a true case of atonement through vicarious suffering, and in close analogy to the divine atonement. In neither case is the substitution for the retribution of sin, but in each for the sake of the rectoral ends of penalty, and thus the objective ground of its remissibility. We have, therefore, in this instance a clear and forceful illustration of the rectoral value of the atonement. And such are the instances previously given. But so far we have presented this value in its nature rather than in its measure. This will find its proper place in treating the sufficiency of the atonement.

5. *Only Sufficient Atonement.*—Nothing could be more fallacious than the objection that the Governmental theory is in any sense acceptilational, or intrinsically indifferent to the character of the substitute in atonement. In the inevitable logic of its deepest and most determining principles it excludes all inferior substitution as insufficient, and requires a divine sacrifice as the only sufficient atonement. Only such a substitution can give adequate expression to the great truths which may fulfill the rectoral office of penalty. The case of Zaleucus may illustrate this. Many other devisements were at his command. He, no doubt, had money, and might have essayed the purchase of impunity for his son by the distribution of large sums. In his absolute power he might have substituted the blindness of some inferior person. But what would have been the signif-

ication or rectoral value of any such a measure? It could give no answer to the real necessity in the case, and must have been utterly silent respecting the great truths imperatively requiring affirmation in any adequate substitution. The sacrifice of one of his own eyes for one of his son's did give the requisite affirmation, while nothing below it could. So, in the substitution of Christ for us. No inferior being and no inferior sacrifice could answer, through the expression and affirmation of great rectoral truths, for the necessary ends of penalty. And, as we shall see in the proper place, no other theory can so fully interpret and appropriate all the facts in the sacrifice of Christ. It has a place and a need for every element of atoning value in his substitution.

6. *True Sense of Satisfaction.*—The satisfaction of justice in atonement for sin is not peculiar to the doctrine of Satisfaction, technically so-called. It is the distinctive nature of the satisfaction that is so peculiar. The Rectoral atonement is also a doctrine of satisfaction to divine justice, and in a true sense. The narrow view which makes the retribution of sin, simply as such, an absolute obligation of justice, and then finds the fulfillment of its office in the punishment of Christ as a substitute in penalty, never can give a true sense of satisfaction. But with broader and truer views of justice, with its ends in moral government as paramount, and with penalties as the rightful means for their attainment; then the vicarious sufferings of Christ, as more effectually attaining the same ends, are the satisfaction of justice, while freely remitting its penalties. This is

a true sense of satisfaction. Love also is satisfied. And a redemption of love must be in satisfaction of love as well as of justice.

Consistently with these views we may appropriate the following definition, and none the less consistently or freely because of its appropriation by Dr. Symington, although a Satisfactionist in the thorough sense of the Reformed soteriology: "*By Satisfaction, in a theological sense, we mean such act or acts as shall accomplish all the moral purposes which, to the infinite wisdom of God, appear fit and necessary under a system of rectoral holiness, and which must otherwise have been accomplished by the exercise of retributive justice upon transgressors in their own persons.*"¹

IV.

THEORY AND SCRIPTURE INTERPRETATION.

We have previously stated that any theory of atonement, to be true, must be true to the Scriptures. It must also fairly interpret the more specific terms of atonement, and be consistent with all truths and facts having a determining relation to it. We freely submit the theory here maintained to this test. It will answer to all the requirements of the case. Nor will an elaborate discussion be necessary to make the fact clear.

1. *Terms of Divine Wrath.*—The Scriptures abound in expressions of the divine wrath.² Our theory fully rec-

¹ Dr. John Pye Smith: "On Sacrifice and Priesthood," p. 287. Mr Watson gives a similar definition: "Theological Institutes," vol. ii, p. 139; also Dr. Raymond: "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, p. 259.

² Psa. 78: 31; Jer. 10: 10; Rom. 1: 18; Eph. 5: 6.

ognizes the fact. And these terms of expression have not their full sense simply as rectoral or judicial. Nor have we any need of such a restriction.

There is ground for a distinction as we think of God personally and rectorally. There is the same distinction respecting a human ruler. He has his personal character and also his rectoral sphere. Judicial obligation may constrain what the personal feeling not only fails to support, but strongly opposes. Yet a personal disposition in condemnation of crime is very proper in a minister of the law. It is necessary, and must extend to the criminal, if law is to be properly maintained. And the denial of all personal displeasure of God against sin and against sinners would be contrary to his essential personal righteousness. Even with men, the higher the moral tone the profounder is the reprobation of sin. In the moral perfection of God it has its profoundest depth. Yet it is not vindictive or revengeful, and coexists with an infinite compassion. These dispositions, so diverse in tone and ministry, are harmonious in God.

It is in no contrariety to this, that, while punishment is with God in sacrifice of his disposition of clemency, his punitive disposition is in moral support of the sacrifice. Without a retributive disposition in man, law has no sufficient guarantee of enforcement. Mere benevolence toward the common welfare would not answer for the protection of society through the means of penalty. We will not allege such a disability in the divine benevolence: but it is clear that without a retributive disposition in God, the punishment of sin would impose

a far greater sacrifice upon his compassion. And his punishment of sin is not simply from his benevolence toward the common welfare, nor from the requirement of judicial rectitude, but also from the impulse of a personal punitive disposition. Hence the terms of the divine wrath have a personal as well as an official sense. The doctrine we maintain so interprets them, and thus shows their consistency with itself.

But the divine wrath, so interpreted, asserts no dominance in the mind of God, and is in fullest harmony with his love. It has no necessity for penal satisfaction either in personal contentment or judicial rectitude. As personal, it neither requires nor admits a substitute in penalty as the ground of its surrender. It is in the nature and necessity of such a disposition that any penal satisfaction be found in the retribution of the actual sinner. To exaggerate it into a necessity for satisfaction, and then to find the satisfaction in the retribution of Christ as substitute in penalty, is to pervert Scripture exegesis, and equally to pervert all theology and all philosophy in the case. In entire consistency with his personal displeasure, God may and does wish the absence of its provocation and the repentance of the rebellious, that he may receive them in clemency. And real as the divine displeasure is against sin and against sinners, atonement is made, not in its personal satisfaction, but in fulfillment of the rectoral office of justice. Hence, on the truth in the case, our theory fully interprets the terms of divine wrath.

2. *Terms of Divine Righteousness.*—The Scripture texts which in different ways attribute righteousness

to God, form a very numerous class.¹ He is righteous; righteousness belongeth unto him; and his doings are righteous. These terms, so applied, are often synonymous with holiness; often, with goodness; sometimes, with justice. And they give no place to the narrow view which mostly restricts the divine righteousness to the retribution of sin.

If, as asserted, the punishment of sin according to its demerit is an absolute requirement of judicial rectitude in God, so that he is righteous only as he so punishes, or unrighteous in any omission, it follows that our doctrine will not properly interpret these terms. But, as we have previously shown, the divine righteousness has no such necessity.

In that God legislates, not arbitrarily or oppressively, but wisely and equitably, as with respect to his subjects—inflicts no unjust punishment, but by means of just penalty protects all rights and interests which might suffer wrong from the impunity of sin, except as forgiveness is granted only on such ground as may equally secure the same end—and rewards his children according to the provisions and promises appertaining to the economy of grace—he is righteous in the truest and highest sense of judicial righteousness which the Scriptures attribute to him. But these facts are in the fullest accord with our doctrine of atonement. It, therefore, fairly and fully interprets the Scripture terms of the divine righteousness.

3. *Terms of Atonement.* — The more special terms of atonement, as previously given, are, atonement itself,

¹ Gen. 18: 25; Psa. 48: 10; Dan. 9: 7; Rom. 1: 17; Rev. 16: 5.

reconciliation, propitiation, redemption, and the appropriated term substitution. All these terms have a proper interpretation in the Governmental theory. As an expression of the office and results of the redemptive mediation of Christ, they are properly rectoral terms. Yet in a deeper sense they imply the personal displeasure of God against sinners, and a change in his personal regard in actual reconciliation. Now they are no longer held in reprobation, but accepted in a loving friendship. Yet the atoning sacrifice of Christ neither appeases the personal displeasure of God nor conciliates his personal friendship. These facts are required and verified by the further fact, that, although the subjects of reconciliation in the death of Christ, yet as sinners we are none the less under the personal displeasure of God, and so continue until, on our repentance and faith, there is an actual reconciliation. The atonement, therefore, is in itself provisory. It renders us salvable consistently with the rectoral office of justice. But these personal regards of God respect man simply in his personal character, condemning him in his sinning, and accepting him in friendship on his repentance and obedience.

Such an exchange of personal regard is not only a consistency in God, but a necessity of his nature. Hence, the case is supposable, and with men sometimes actual, where personal friendship and judicial condemnation are co-existent. And could a sinner, without the helpful grace of redemption, sincerely repent and render a true obedience, there would be a coincidence upon him of the divine regards of personal

friendship and judicial condemnation. Hence, these terms of atonement, while deeply implying the personal displeasure of God against sinners as such, represent the sufferings of Christ, not as appeasing such displeasure, nor as conciliating his personal favor, but as the ground of his judicial reconciliation; yet always and only on such conditions of a new spiritual life as to carry with his judicial forgiveness his personal reconciliation and friendship. Such is their true sense; and such is their interpretation in the Governmental theory.

4. *Terms of Atoning Suffering.*—Any issue on these terms respects neither the intensity of the sufferings of Christ nor the fact of their atoning office, but the question whether they were in any proper sense penally retributive.

This may be noted first, that there is neither term nor text of Scripture which explicitly asserts the penal substitution of Christ in atonement for sin. It is a noteworthy fact: and the assertion of it will stand good until the contrary be shown. As a fact, it is against the theory of atonement by penal substitution, and in favor of that of vicarious suffering.

The punishment of Christ as substitute in atonement is rendered familiar by frequency of utterance in theological discussion; but this is the utterance of theology, not the assertion of Scripture. Exegesis often asserts the same thing; but this is interpretation, not the texts themselves. They neither require nor warrant the interpretation. Redemption by vicarious suffering, without the penal element, will give their proper sense.

Nor is there any term or text of Scripture expressive of the atoning suffering of Christ which this doctrine cannot freely appropriate in its deepest sense. Yet we do not think it necessary to review all the texts in question. It will suffice briefly to notice a few of the stronger.

“For he hath made him *to be sin* (ἁμαρτίαν) for us.”¹ A common rendering of the original is *sin-offering*. This has ample warrant, and avoids the insuperable difficulties attending any restriction to a primary or ethical sense of sin. That the Scriptures often use the original term in the sense of sin-offering there is no reason to question.² In the references given, after a description of the sin-offering, we have for it the simple phrase, “ἁμαρτία ἐστὶ,” and so used several times; also, after the preceptive instruction respecting the daily sacrifice of atonement, we have the phrase, “τὸ μυσχάριον τὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ποιήσεις,” the last two words being the very same used in the text under review. On ἁμαρτία, as used in the references given in Leviticus, Sophocles says that “it is equivalent to *θύσια περὶ ἁμαρτίας*.”³ Thus we have in Scripture usage ample warrant for rendering the same term in the text under review as *sin-offering*. Nor do we thereby surrender any vital truth or fact of atonement. Christ is all the same a sacrifice for sin.

¹ 2 Cor. 5: 21. ² Exod. 29: 14, 36; Lev. 4: 24; 5: 9; Hos. 4: 8.

³ “Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods.” And we think Macknight quite correct in giving this sense to the same term in Heb. 9: 26, 28; certainly so in the second place.—*On the Epistles*.

If this rendering be denied, what then? Will sin be held in any strictly ethical sense, or under any legitimate definition of sin proper? Certainly not. Christ could not so be made sin for us. No one who can analyze the terms and take their import will so maintain. Sin must still be subject to interpretation. Shall the rendering be the turpitude or demerit of sin? Even Satisfactionists must discard this, as they deny the possibility of its transference. Shall it be the guilt of sin? This some will allege. But guilt as a punishable reality cannot be separated from sin as a concrete fact in the person of a sinner. Only punishment remains as a possible rendering. But here is a like difficulty, that sin as punishable is untransferable.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse (κατάρα) for us: for it is written, Cursed (Επικατάρατος) is every one that hangeth on a tree."¹ The more literal sense is obvious, and is specially emphasized by the citation in the text. Nor would we conceal or avoid any force of the terms used. The curse of the law on us, and from which Christ redeems us, is the law's condemnation and the imminence of its penalty. And he redeems us by being made a curse for us in his crucifixion. But in what sense a curse? In the literal sense of the terms, and as emphasized by the quotation? This in the Hebrew text is, "for he that is hanged is accursed of God."²

The doctrine of Satisfaction requires this full sense. If the curse is the divine punishment of sin, then whoever is so punished is accursed of God. So, if our sins

¹ Gal. 3: 13.

² Deut. 21: 23.

were thus punished in Christ, then was he accursed of God. Will the doctrine of Satisfaction hold the literal sense, with its inevitable implications? Only in a sense consistent with the facts in the case is he that hangeth on a tree the subject of a divine curse. In many instances the most holy and beloved of the Father have been so executed. They were not accursed of God. And along with the fact of the divine malediction we must ever take the criminality of the subject. As such, and only as such, is any one accursed of God. Thus it is written of odious criminals, executed for their crimes and then exposed in suspension upon a tree, that they are accursed of God. Was Christ so accursed? Did the malediction of God fall upon him in his crucifixion as upon a criminal in the expiation of his sins under a judicial punishment?

We must depart from such a sense of this text. Its implications in the case of our Lord and Saviour would be violative of all truth and fact, and repugnant to all true Christian sentiment. We never again can go back to Luther's shocking exposition of the text; which, however, is in the order of its more literal sense, and within the limit of its inevitable implications. And that Christ in our redemption submitted to a manner of death which, as the punishment of heinous crime was in the deepest sense an accursed death, will, without the curse and wrath of God on him, or any penal element in his suffering, answer for all the requirements of a proper exegesis.¹

¹ Dr. Leonard Woods: Works, vol. iv, p. 72; Albert Barnes: "The Atonement," pp. 294-296.

“Who his own self bare our sins, τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, in his own body on the tree.”¹ The apostle no doubt had in mind the words of the prophet uttered in his marvelous prevision of the redemptive work of Christ.² Hence the two passages here stand together.

They are much in the style and sense of those previously considered. That they fully mean the fact of an atonement for sin in the vicarious suffering of Christ there is no reason to question. And but for the insuperable difficulties previously stated, we might admit an element of penal substitution. The texts neither assert nor require it. Nor will the doctrine of Satisfaction appropriate them literally. Let it put upon “our sins” any proper definition according to the literal sense, and then answer to the question, whether Christ really bore them in his own body on the tree? It will not answer affirmatively. From such a sense the strongest doctrine of penal substitution will now turn aside, and proceed to an interpretation in accord with its more moderate views.

As previously stated, we have in these texts the fact of an atonement for sin in vicarious suffering. This fact justifies the use of their strongest terms of substitution, and answers for their interpretation. With the sufferings and death of Christ as the only and necessary ground of forgiveness and salvation, we can most freely and fully appropriate them. Nor do we need the penal element for such appropriation. And on no other doctrine than on that which we maintain can it be said of Christ more truly, or with deeper emphasis,

¹ 1 Pet. 2: 24.

² Isa. 53: 4-12.

that "he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed:" "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

V.

THEORY AND SCRIPTURE FACTS.

There are a few special facts, clearly scriptural and with decisive bearing on the nature of the atonement, which may be noted here. They will be found witnessing for the theory which we maintain, and against that in special issue with it.

1. *Guilt of Redeemed Sinners*.—It is an obvious fact both of the Scriptures and of the reason of the case, that sinners as such are under divine condemnation and guilt. There is no exception in favor of elect sinners, whose sins are alleged to have suffered merited punishment in Christ as substitute in penalty. Even admitting the Calvinistic distinction between the elect and non-elect, redeemed and non-redeemed, there is no such exception so long as sin is their habit. The divine law condemns all alike. The penalty of justice threatens all alike.

Why should this be true of any one whose sins have suffered merited punishment in Christ as his accepted substitute? It cannot be true.¹ Whoever suffers the just punishment of his own sins is thereafter as free from guilt or answerableness in penalty as though he had not sinned. If such punishment be possible and actual by substitution, the same consequence must

¹ Chap. vii, VI, 2.

follow. And we have previously shown, by quotations from the highest authorities on the doctrine of Satisfaction, that justice itself imperatively requires the discharge of all sinners the just punishment of whose sins Christ has suffered in their behalf.¹

On such a scheme the discharge of redeemed sinners must take place at once. Indeed, guilt is never actualized in them. The punishment anticipates their sin. Then so must their justification or discharge. And all that is said to the contrary respecting the requirement of proper conditions or the divine determination when the discharge shall issue is either irrelevant or inconsistent, and therefore nugatory. Guilt and punishment are specific facts. The penalty of justice once inflicted, the subject is free. And on the scheme of Satisfaction redeemed sinners can no more be answerable in penalty for their sins at any time than Christ as their substitute can be answerable again for the same after he has once suffered their merited punishment. "So far as the guilt of an act—in other words, its obligation to punishment—is concerned, if the transgressor, or his *accepted* substitute, has endured the infliction that is set over against it, the law is satisfied, and the obligation to punishment is discharged."² This is consistent, and to the point.

The illogical jumbling which asserts an atonement for sin by actual penal substitution, and then makes it over into a kind of deposit, to be drawn upon or dispensed at the option of the depositary, and that may

¹ Chap. vii, VI, 2.

² Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," pp. 300, 301.

be utterly refused to any and all, should be done with. It is in utter contrariety to the Reformed soteriology, into which the doctrine of Satisfaction by penal substitution is so deeply wrought, as it is to that doctrine itself. Yet we are constantly meeting this very jumbling. Here is a specimen: "God is under no obligation to make an atonement for the sin of the world; and, *after he has made one, he is at perfect liberty to apply it to whom he pleases, or not to apply it at all.* The atonement is *his*, and he may do what he will with his own."¹ We have no adverse criticism, except upon what is so palpably inconsistent with the doctrine of Satisfaction, as it is with the citation just now given from the same author and taken from the same discussion. Whenever the payment of a debt is accepted, and from whomsoever, the debtor is free. Whenever a sin is justly punished, and in whomsoever, the sinner is free. Any detention, either in punishment or in liability to it, is an injustice. And the atonement of Satisfaction is not a deposit which may go to the payment of our debt of guilt, but the actual payment; not something that may be accounted to us for the punishment of our sins, but their actual punishment. The making of such an atonement is the application of it. And now to represent it as a deposit that may be drawn upon—to write of its optional application, and of its rightful refusal to any or to all—is to jumble egregiously.

It is still a fact of the Scriptures, as also of the rea-

¹ Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," p. 314. The italicizing is his own.

son of the case, that sinners as such, though the subjects of redemption, are in a state of guilt. It is a fact contrary to the theory of Satisfaction and in its disproof, as we have previously shown. But the atonement in substituted suffering, not in substituted punishment, and a provisory ground of forgiveness, not only agrees with such a fact, but requires it. Therefore, as the only alternative to the doctrine of Satisfaction for a real atonement in Christ, the fact of guilt in redeemed sinners witnesses with all the force of its logic to the truth of the Governmental theory.

2. *Forgiveness in Justification.*—As sin in the redeemed has real guilt, and no less on account of the redemption, therefore justification, whatever else it may be, must include an actual forgiveness of sin. There must be a discharge from guilt as then real, a remission of penalty as then imminent. There is such a forgiveness. Nor is it really questioned, except for the exigency of a system, by truly evangelized minds. The Scriptures are full of it. It is in all the warnings against impending wrath; in all the urgent entreaties to repentance and salvation; in all the requirement and urgency of faith as the necessary condition of justification; in the deep sense of guilt and peril realized in a true conviction for sin; in the earnest prayer springing from such distress of conscience, and importuning the mercy of heaven; in the peace and joy of soul when the prayer is answered and the Spirit witnesses to a gracious adoption.

Justification is not merely the information, given at the time of such experience, of a discharge from guilt

long before achieved through the merited punishment of sin in a substitute. As up to this time the guilt is real, so the forgiveness is now real. And it is much against the theory of Satisfaction that it cannot give us a true doctrine of forgiveness in justification. But the doctrine which we maintain encounters no such objection. Such an atonement, while a sufficient ground of forgiveness, leaves all the guilt with the sinner until his justification by faith. Then his sins are really forgiven. So witness the Scriptures; and so witnesses many a happy experience.

3. *Grace in Forgiveness.*—The Satisfactionist thinks his own doctrine pre-eminently one of grace. Is it such in the forgiveness of sin? This is the special point we make here. Forgiveness is in the very nature of it an act of grace. That the divine forgiveness in our justification is such an act the Scriptures fully testify. Still, it is true that a debt paid, and by whomsoever, is not forgiven; that a penalty inflicted, and upon whomsoever, is not remitted. And let it be remembered that the absolute irremissibility of penalty is the ground-principle in the theory of Satisfaction.

But since the economy of redemption is of God; since it originated in his infinite love; and since he provided the sacrifice in atonement for sin, is not his grace in forgiveness free and full? So the Satisfactionist reasons. Nor would we abate aught of the love of God in human redemption. There is infinite grace in his forgiveness of sin; but on the doctrine of atonement which we maintain, and not on that of Satisfaction.

If a doctrine is constructed, as that of Satisfaction.

in the fullest recognition of a distinction of persons in the divine Trinity, and also of the specific part of each in the economy of human salvation, then it must not, for any after-exigency, ignore or suppress such distinction. If in the atonement, and as the only possible atonement, the Father inflicted the merited punishment of sin upon the Son, and the Son endured the punishment so inflicted, then they fulfill distinct offices in redemption. Yet the fact is often ignored or suppressed, in order to defend the doctrine of Satisfaction against the objection that it denies to the Father a gracious forgiveness of sin. Even Marshall Randles finds it convenient to do this in the defense of his own doctrine of a conditional penal substitution against the same objection.¹

If, in the obligation of an absolute retributive justice the Father must inflict merited punishment upon sin—and if in the atonement he inflicted such punishment upon his Son as the substitute of sinners—then he does not remit the penalty. No dialectics can identify such infliction with remission. And where there is no remission of penalty there can be no grace of forgiveness. Hence, the doctrine of Satisfaction does not admit the grace of the Father in forgiveness; which fact of grace, however, is clearly given in the Scriptures.

But this great fact of grace is in full accord with the Governmental theory. A provisory atonement in substituted suffering, rendering forgiveness consistent with the rectoral office of justice, yet in itself abating nothing of the guilt of sin, as its punishment must, gives

¹ "Substitution: Atonement," pp. 247, 248.

place for a real and gracious forgiveness. There is a real forgiveness in our justification, and an infinite grace of the Father therein. And the Rectoral theory, agreeing with these facts so decisive of the nature of redemptive substitution, and the only theory of a real atonement so agreeing, gives us the true doctrine.

4. *Universality of Atonement.*—We have previously noted the fact that the doctrine of Satisfaction requires, on the ground of consistency, a limited atonement; and also that its universality, as given in the Scriptures, is fatal to the scheme.¹ But the Governmental theory is consistent with the universality of the atonement, with a real conditionality of its saving grace, and with the fact that the subjects of redemption may reject its overtures of mercy and perish. It is the only theory of a real atonement in accord with these facts, and, therefore, the true one.

5. *Universal Overture of Grace.*—Who will hesitate in such an overture? Who will question its obligation? But without a universal atonement the offer would be made to many for whom there is no grace of forgiveness: hence there could be no such obligation. And if the atonement be for all, it must be of a nature to render its universality consistent with all the facts of soteriology. It is such only on the Rectoral theory.

6. *Doctrinal Result.*—The fact of a real atonement in Christ is with the Satisfaction and Governmental theories. Hence the question of its nature is between them. We appeal it to the decision of the facts given in this section. Here are five scriptural facts, all prom-

¹ Chap. vii, VI, 3.

inent in soteriology, and all vitally concerning the very nature of the atonement. They are inconsistent with the doctrine of Satisfaction, but in full accord with the Rectoral theory. They require such an atonement, and, therefore, certify its truth.

7. *Relation of Atonement to Childhood.*—We may not entirely omit the question of this relation. Yet it is not directly in the line of our discussion, and is, therefore, to be passed with little more than a reference. And the reference is properly to a particular phase of the question. There are questions of a common infant justification and regeneration, but these we entirely omit as irrelevant. The reference we make is to the atonement in its relation to the salvation of such as die in infancy.

But even this aspect of the question is only incidental to our discussion. We treat the atonement in view of the fact of sin and the requirements of moral government. It is a provision for the salvation of sinners, and necessary for them as sinners. On the ground of such facts rests the validity of our argument for the necessity of an atonement, and the correctness of our theory of its nature. Hence the question of its relation to childhood is irrelevant to this discussion; or, if relevant, not peculiar, and, therefore, requiring no separate consideration. If there be a native guilt and damnable-ness as well as a native depravity—ever two distinct questions, however jumbled in theological treatment—then the relation of the atonement to the salvation of dying infants is the same as to that of adult sinners. But if, with the reality of a native depravity, there be

not a native demerit and damnableness, then this relation is peculiar, and, therefore, not relevant to our discussion of atonement.

From the facts thus brought into view it is apparent that the question of this relation is, first of all and chiefly, a question of anthropology, particularly of original sin, and not in the sense of a native depravity, but in the far deeper sense of a native demerit and damnableness. The view taken of this question must consistently determine the view respecting the relation of the atonement to the salvation of such as die in infancy.

With a native guilt and damnableness, dying infants would, as just noted, require for their salvation the same atonement and forgiveness as adult sinners. This is really the Calvinistic position, and without difficulty at this point. There is no peculiar relation of the atonement to the salvation of infants, and hence no place for any perplexing question respecting it. There is still, however, a very great difficulty in this system, but lying back in the matter of a native demerit and damnableness.

But if, with a doctrine of native depravity, that of a native demerit and damnableness is denied—the really consistent Arminian position—then the redemptive economy has some peculiarity of relation to the salvation of such as die in infancy. The question is not without its difficulty. But we are not disposed to replace it with the far greater difficulty in the Calvinistic position. We must confess that the usual Arminian treatment of this question is not very satisfactory. It

often hesitates, vacillates. There is a native guilt, but not guilt as of actual sin. There is a native demerit and damnableness, and there is not—especially not such as might, consistently with the divine justice, be visited with endless judicial wrath. The indecision is from an attempt to hold Calvinism and Arminianism together beyond the point of a real divergence, or from a failure to give scientific completeness to the latter. But demerit and damnableness are such specific facts, and facts in such positive relation to justice and law, that they cannot be and not be at the same time. Hence the answer respecting them should be categorical—yea or nay, not yea and nay. It must be so before we can conclude the question whether the atonement has any peculiar relation to the salvation of such as die in infancy.

We have previously noted the real distinction between the two questions of a native depravity and a native demerit and damnableness. The former we hold fully and firmly; the latter we do not hold. It is not in our article "Of Original or Birth Sin." The fact has the deeper doctrinal significance because of the history of the article as adopted into our creed. The original article from which it is taken—ninth of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England—is very strong in the assertion of a native demerit and damnableness; and the very significant fact is, that all this part was authoritatively omitted from the article on its adoption as our own symbol.¹ But our native

¹See our article in the "Methodist Quarterly Review," p. 405. July, 1877.

depravity is in itself a moral ruin. Deliverance therefrom is only through the economy of redemption. Infants dying in infancy are saved in Christ. This we fully and gratefully believe. But the relation of his redemptive mediation to their salvation is peculiar. Their salvation has not the same sense in every fact as that of adult sinners. The question is a mystery as yet without solution. The Scriptures are quite silent respecting it. We have no clear light to give; as certainly we have received none from others.

For ourselves we make this concession of mystery in the question before us without the slightest hesitation. Every great doctrinal system encounters serious, even insoluble difficulty at some point. When the case arises let it be frankly confessed. In this our Calvinistic brethren are worthy of most honorable mention. Yet some Arminians, accustomed to think every thing very clear on this question, will regard our position with surprise and dissatisfaction. They are probably not such as have studied the question most deeply.

A proper discussion of this question, as previously noted, would require a discussion of anthropology, especially of original sin. It would also require a treatment of the application of redemptive grace in salvation. But these questions belong to other divisions of theology, and would lead us quite aside from the discussion in hand.

CHAPTER IX.

SUFFICIENCY OF THE ATONEMENT.

THE substitution of Christ in suffering answers for an atonement through a revelation of such moral truths as may give the highest ruling power to the divine law. It must, therefore, embody such facts as will give the necessary revelation. Only thus can the atonement have sufficiency. It is proper, therefore, that we specially note some of these facts of atoning value. Authors differ somewhat respecting them.¹ This may arise, at least in part, from a difference in the doctrine. The vital facts are clear in the light of Scripture.

I.

THE HOLINESS OF CHRIST.

1. *A Necessary Element.*—A criminal cannot be a proper mediator. Whoever dishonors himself and the law by his own transgression is thereby disqualified for the office of mediation in behalf of a criminal. If human government does not require moral perfection for such office, still, the mediator must not be amenable to penalty on his own account. And the higher his personal righteousness and moral worth, the more valuable will be his mediation as the ground of forgiveness.

¹Dr. Jenkyn: "The Extent of the Atonement," chap. ii; Prof. Bruce: "The Humiliation of Christ," p. 385.

As a mediation, so accepted, must inculcate respect for law and enforce obedience to its requirements, so, much depends upon the moral worth of the mediator. And Christ, in the atonement, must be without sin and clear of all its penal liabilities. He must be personally holy.¹

2. *Scripture View*.—The Scriptures record, and with frequent repetition, the sinlessness of Christ, and ever hold the fact in vital connection with his redeeming work. It is emphasized as fitting and necessary in the atonement, and also as an element of special value.² In all the force of its own worth it is a revelation of the truths and motives which constitute the best efficiencies of moral government. The vicarious sacrifice of the sinless Christ as the sole ground of forgiveness, scepters the divine law with a ruling efficiency, with a majesty of holiness, above all the power of punishment. Also, his holiness gives its grace to all other elements of value in the atonement.

II.

HIS GREATNESS.

1. *An Element of Atoning Value*.—Whoever needs the service of a mediator is concerned to find one of the highest character and rank attainable. The minister of the law vested with the pardoning power is officially concerned therein. For the value of the mediation is not in its personal influence with him, but from its rectoral relations. He may already be personally

¹ Ullman: "The Sinlessness of Jesus," pp. 259-261; Rev. Robert Hall. "On Substitution," Works, vol. i, p. 269.

² 2 Cor. 5: 21; Heb. 7: 26; 1 Pet. 3: 18; 1 John 3: 5.

disposed to clemency, but needing a proper ground for its exercise, so that law shall not suffer in its honor and authority. Such ground is furnished in the greatness and rank of the mediator. And the higher these qualities the more complete is the ground of forgiveness, or the more effective the support of law in all its rectoral offices. There is a philosophy in these facts, as manifest in our previous discussions.¹ Beyond this the case may be appealed to the common judgment.

There is the same principle in the redemptive mediation of Christ. His greatness and rank go into his atonement as an element of the highest value. The Scriptures fully recognize and reveal the fact. It is with accordant reason and design that they so frequently and explicitly connect his greatness and rank with his redeeming work.

2. *An Infinite Value in Christ.*—In the Scriptures, to which reference was just now made as connecting the greatness of Christ with his redemptive mediation, he is revealed as the Son of God and essentially divine; as in the form of God and equal with him in glory; as the Creator and Ruler of all things; as Lord of the angels.² In him, therefore, divinity itself mediates in the redemption of man. Thus an infinite greatness and rank give rectoral support to the law of God in the ministry of forgiveness to repenting sinners. This is a fact of infinite sufficiency in the atonement of Christ.

¹ Ch. viii, III, 3, 4.

² John 1: 1-3, 14; Phil. 2: 6-8; Col. 1: 14-17; Heb. 1: 2, 3.

III.

HIS VOLUNTARINESS.

1. *A Necessary Fact.*—The injustice of a coerced substitution of one in place of another would deprive it of all benefit in atonement for sin. But when the sacrifice is in the free choice of the substitute, its voluntariness not only gives full place to every other element of atoning value, but is itself such an element.

2. *Christ a Voluntary Substitute.*—On this fact the Scriptures leave us no reason for any question. And the frequency and fullness of their utterances respecting the freedom of Christ in the work of redemption give to that freedom all the certainty and significance which its truth requires. It is true that the Father gave the Son; that he sent him to be the Saviour of the world; that he spared him not, but delivered him up for us all; that he prepared for him a body for his priestly sacrifice in atonement for sin; but it is none the less true, that in all this the mind of the Son was at one with the mind of the Father; that he freely and gladly chose the incarnation in order to our redemption; that he loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God; that, with full power over his own life, he freely surrendered it in our redemption. And the fact of this freedom is carried back of his incarnation and atoning suffering to the Son in his essential divinity and in his glory with the Father.¹

3. *Atoning Value.*—The voluntariness of Christ crowns with its grace all the marvelous facts of his re-

¹ Psa. 40: 6-8; John 10: 17, 18; Phil. 2: 6-8; Heb. 10: 5-9.

deeming work. His atoning sacrifice, while in the purest free-willing, was at once in an infinite beneficence toward us, and in an infinite filial love and obedience toward his Father. And the will of the Father, in obedience to which the sacrifice is made, so far from limiting its atoning worth, provides for its highest sufficiency by opening such a sphere for the beneficence and filial obedience of the Son. Both have infinite moral worth with the Father. So he regards them, not in any commercial valuation, but as intrinsically good. Now forgiveness on such a ground is granted only on account of what is most precious with God, and therefore a vindication of his justice and holiness, of his rectoral honor and authority, in the salvation of repenting souls.¹

IV.

HIS DIVINE SONSHIP.

1. *Sense of Atoning Value.*—The nearer a mediator stands in the relations of friendship with an offended party, the more persuasive will his intercession be. But this is a matter of mere personal influence, not of rectoral service. The party offended is regarded simply in his personal disposition, not as a minister of the law, with the obligations of his office; and, so far, the case has more affinity with the Satisfaction theory than with the Governmental. According to this theory, God needs no vicarious sacrifice for his personal propitiation. His need is for some provision which will render the forgiveness of sin consistent with his own honor and authority as moral Ruler, and with the good of his

¹ Rev. Robert Hall: "On Substitution." Works, vol. i, p. 269

subjects. Hence, while we find an element of atoning value in the divine Sonship of Christ, we find it not in a matter of personal influence with the Father, but on a principle of rectoral service. This value lies in the moral worth which the Sonship of Christ gives to his redeeming work in the appreciation of the Father. The nature of it will further appear in the treatment of its measure in the next paragraph.

2. *Measure of Value.*—The divine filiation of the Redeemer furnishes an element of great value in the atonement. This may be illustrated in connection with two facts of his Sonship.

A Ground of the Father's Love.—The divine filiation of the Redeemer is original and singular. It is such as to be the ground of the Father's infinite love to his Son. On nothing are the Scriptures more explicit than on the fact of this love. Therein we have the ground of the Father's infinite appreciation of the redeeming work of the Son. And the truth returns, that forgiveness is granted only on the ground of what is most precious with the Father. By all this preciousness, as revealed in the light of the Father's love to the Son, his redemptive mediation, as the only and necessary ground of forgiveness, gives utterance to the authority of the divine law, and the obligation of its maintenance; to the sacredness of moral rights and interests, and the imperative requirement of their protection; to the evil of sin, and the urgency of its restriction. These are the very facts which give the highest, best ruling power to the divine law. And thus we have an element of sufficiency in the atonement.

A Revelation of his Love to Us.—The redeeming love of God toward us is most clearly seen in the light of his love for his own Son. Only in this view do we read the meaning of its divine utterances.¹ Why did the Father sacrifice the Son of his love in our redemption? It could not have been from any need of personal propitiation toward us. The redeeming sacrifice, itself the fruit of his love to us, is proof to the contrary. He gave his Son to die for us that he might reach us in the grace of forgiveness and salvation. Why then did he so sacrifice the Son of his love? The only reason lies in the moral interests concerned, and which, in the case of forgiveness, required an atonement in their protection. But for his regard for these rights and interests, and, therefore, for the sacredness and authority of his law as the necessary means of their protection, he might have satisfied the yearnings of his compassion toward us in a mere administrative forgiveness. This he could not do consistently with either his goodness or his rectoral obligation. And rather than surrender the interests which his law must protect, he delivers up his own Son to suffering and death. Therefore, in this great sacrifice—ininitely great because of his love for his Son, and therein so revealed—in this great sacrifice, and with all the emphasis of its greatness, God makes declaration of an infinite regard for the interests and ends of his moral government, and of an immutable purpose to maintain them. This declaration, in all the force of its divine verities, goes to the support of his government, and gives the highest honor

¹ John 3: 16; Rom. 8: 32; 1 John 4: 10.

and ruling power to his law, while forgiveness is granted to repenting sinners.

V.

HIS HUMAN BROTHERHOOD.

1. *Mediation must Express an Interest.*—A stranger to a condemned party, and without reason for any special interest in his case, could not be accepted as a mediator in his behalf. A pardon granted on such ground would, in respect of all ends of government, be the same as one granted on mere sovereignty. The case is clearly different when, on account of intimate relations of friendship, or other special reasons of interest, the mediation is an expression of profound sympathy. Forgiveness on such an intercession is granted, not for any thing trivial or indifferent, and so evincing an indifference to the law, but only for what is regarded as real, and a sufficient justification of the forgiveness. This gives support to law. It loses nothing of respect in the common judgment, nothing of its ruling force. And the profounder the sympathy of the mediator, the greater is the rectoral service of his mediation as the ground of forgiveness.

2. *The Principle in Atonement.*—Christ appropriates the principle by putting himself into the most intimate relation with us. In the incarnation he clothes himself in our nature, partakes of our flesh and blood, and enters into brotherhood with us.¹ Herein is the reality and the revelation of a profound interest in his mediation. The love and sympathy of this brotherhood he

¹ John 1: 14; Gal. 4: 4, 5; Heb. 2: 11, 14–16.

carries into the work of atonement. They are voiced in his tears and sorrows, in the soul agonies of Gethsemane, in the bitter outcries of Calvary, and are still voiced in his intercessory prayers in heaven. Men and angels, in a spontaneous moral judgment, pronounce such a mediation a sufficient ground of forgiveness, and vindicate the divine administration therein. No shadow falls upon the divine rectitude. The divine law suffers no dishonor nor loss of ruling power. Thus the human brotherhood of Christ gives sufficiency to his atonement.¹

VI.

HIS SUFFERING.

1. *Extreme Views.*—In one view the suffering of Christ contains, in respect of our guilt or forgiveness, the whole atoning value. Only substitutional punishment so atones; and this just in the measure of the penal suffering endured. “This hypothesis measures the atonement not only by the number of the elect, but by the intensity and degree of the suffering to be endured for their sin. It adjusts the dimensions of the atonement to a nice mathematical point, and poises its infinite weight of glory even to the small dust of a balance. I need not say that the hand which stretches such lines, and holds such scales, is a bold one. Such a calculation represents the Son of God as giving so much suffering for so much value received in the souls given to him; and represents the Father as dispensing so many favors and blessings for so much value received in obedience and sufferings. This is the com-

¹ Rev. Robert Hall: “On Substitution;” *Works*, vol. i, p. 270.

mercial atonement—the commercial redemption, with which Supralapsarian theology degrades the Gospel, and fetters its ministers; which sums up the worth of a stupendous moral transaction with arithmetic, and with its little span limits what is infinite.”¹ This is the atonement by equal, as well as by identical penalty. It is really the atonement by equivalent penalty, which varies the case by the admission of a less degree of penal suffering, but only on account of its higher value arising from the rank of the substitute, while an absolute justice receives full satisfaction in behalf of the elect.² Such a doctrine has no lofty grandeur, nor profound philosophy. It blanks the grace of God in forgiveness. This is one extreme.

In another view, it is denied that the suffering of Christ, especially in the facts subsequent to the incarnation, is essential to the atonement. The author just cited purposely omits “intensity of suffering” as a necessary element of atonement, and does not hesitate to assert that the incarnation of the Son of God is in itself such an act of condescension in behalf of sinners, that, as the only ground of forgiveness, it is a higher revelation of the divine justice than could be given by their eternal subjection to the merited punishment of sin. Such is the other extreme.

2. *A Necessary Element.*—We are not honoring the divine love by an affected exaltation of one fact, however stupendous, in the work of human redemption. Nor should we omit, as a necessary element, what the

¹ Dr. Jenkyn: “The Extent of the Atonement,” pp. 27, 28.

² Chap. vii, II, 3.

Scriptures account to the atonement as the vital fact of its sufficiency. That the sufferings of Christ are so vital is clear from many texts previously cited or given by reference. They are even essential to the atoning service of other elements of sufficiency. The holiness, greatness, voluntariness, divine Sonship, and human brotherhood of Christ are, in themselves, but qualities of fitness for his redemptive mediation, and enter as elements of sufficiency into the atonement only as he enters into his sufferings. Without his sufferings and death there is really no atonement. This is the truth of Scripture.

3. *An Infinite Sufficiency.*—The sufferings of Christ, which go into the atonement as a revelation of God in his regard for the principles and ends of his moral government, and in his immutable purpose to maintain them, give to it an infinite sufficiency. We cannot fathom these sufferings. We get the deeper sounding only as we hold them in association with the greatness and rank of Christ himself.

The incarnation itself is a great fact of atoning value in the redemptive mediation of Christ. This is clear in our doctrine, however difficult it may be for that of Satisfaction so to appropriate it. It must go into such an atonement, if at all, either as a vicarious punishment or as a fact of vicarious righteousness. The scheme finds atonement in nothing else. Now the incarnation itself could not be a fact of penal substitution, because it could not be a punishment. Could it be a fact of vicarious obedience, and imputable to the elect? We know not the Scripture exegesis nor the

philosophy of the fact which can so interpret it. It is not such because a fact of obedience. The subordination of the Son puts all his acts, even those of creation and providence, into the sphere of filial obedience. And we might as well account these acts an imputable personal righteousness in atonement for the elect as so to account his obedience in the free choice of the incarnation. So difficult, if not absolutely impossible, is it for the doctrine of Satisfaction to appropriate the great fact of the incarnation as an element of atonement. Our doctrine has no difficulty in the appropriation. We require it to be neither a fact of penal substitution nor one of imputable personal righteousness. It goes into the atonement as one of the great facts of condescension and sacrifice in the work of redemption.

The humiliation of Christ in the incarnation thus becomes a great fact of sufficiency in the atonement. His condescension to the form of an angel would have been much. How infinitely more the actual condescension! There are two marvelous facts: the self-emptying—*ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσε*—or self-divestment of a rightful glory in equality with God; and an assumption, instead, of the form of a servant in the likeness of men.¹ The Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,² and dwelling in the glory of the Father,³ condescends to the plane of humanity, and dwells here in the likeness of sinful flesh.⁴

The incarnation is not the limit of the humiliation and sacrifice of Christ: "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient

¹ Phil. 2: 6, 7.² Heb. 1: 3.³ John 17: 5.⁴ Rom. 8: 3.

unto death, even the death of the cross.”¹ What scenes are disclosed in Gethsemane and on Calvary! Burdens of sorrow, depths of woe, intensities of agony! An awful mystery of suffering! At such a cost the Saviour redeems the world.

Nor have we the truest, deepest sense of the sufferings of Christ, except in the fact that he endured them as the *Theanthropos*. With the doctrine of a union of the divine and human natures in a unity of personality in Christ, and that in the incarnation he was truly the *God-man*, we know not either the theology or philosophy which may limit his sufferings to a mere human consciousness. And with the impassivity of his divine nature in the incarnation and atonement, many texts of Scripture, fraught with infinite treasures of grace and love, would be little more than meaningless words.² On such a principle their exegesis would be superficial and false to their infinitely deeper meaning. The divine Son incarnate, and so incarnate in human nature as to unite it with himself in personal unity, could suffer, and did suffer in the redemption of the world.³

Such are the facts which combine in the atonement, and, on the principles previously explained, give to it an infinite sufficiency. They are God's revelation of himself in his moral government, for the vindication of his justice and law in the ministry of forgiveness,

¹ Phil. 2: 8.

² Acts 20: 28; Rom. 8: 32; Phil. 2: 6-11; Col. 1: 13-17; Heb. 1: 3; 2: 9, 14-18; Rev. 1: 5, 6; 5: 6-13.

³ Dr. Shedd: "Theological Essays," p. 272; Dr. Raymond: "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, pp. 275-282.

for the restraint of sin, and for the protection of the rights and interests of his subjects. So much has he done, and so much required, that forgiveness might be consistent with these great ends. And now while on such ground, but only on such, repenting souls are forgiven and saved, he omits no judicial requirement, and surrenders no right nor interest either of himself or his subjects.

CHAPTER X.

A LESSON FOR ALL INTELLIGENCES.

1. *Atonement for Man Only.*—Speculative and fanciful minds, forgetting the verities of Scripture, may reach the thought not only of the sufficiency, but also of the actuality, of an atonement for moral beings other than men.¹ The Scriptures, however, limit it to the human race. Nor would any superabundance of its grace, nor any further prevalence of sin, warrant the inference of a wider extension. There are other orders under the power and curse of sin.² Here is the prostration of lofty powers, the corruption of once holy natures, and an awful lapse of moral beings from the highest happiness into the profoundest woe. Nor have they any power of self-recovery. There is, therefore, in their case all the need of redemption arising out of an utter moral ruin. Nor will the divine love allow the supposition that, however just their doom, they have fallen below the reach of its pity. Yet the Scriptures give no intimation of an atonement for them, but a contrary one. Christ becomes our brother by an incarnation in our nature, that through death he might redeem us.³ And we have this significant utterance of limitation: “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”⁴

¹ As Origen did.² 2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude 6.³ Heb. 2: 14, 15.⁴ Heb. 2: 16.

The passage, viewed contextually and in its own terms, clearly limits redemption in its directness and actuality to the human race.

2. *Broader Relation to Moral Beings.*—An atonement in the sacrifice of Christ, while for man only, may yet have a lesson of profound moral truth for other and for all intelligences.¹ It is such a truth, and of such moral significance, that it must deeply interest all moral beings to whom a knowledge of it may come.

And the notion of a wide extension of such information is no conjecture, nor even a mere rational idea. Rational it is; for the atonement is too great a truth, and too broad and intimate in its relations, for any narrow limitation. The long preparation for the redeeming Advent was known in heaven as on earth. Angels often appear amid the scenes of that preparation. The redeeming Lord comes forth from the midst of their adoring myriads. Many are with him in the lowly scenes of his humiliation, deeply interested in him and in his great work. They form his triumphal escort in the ascension, and all their hosts, in glad acclaim, welcome his return. Here are means and evidences of a widely extended knowledge of our redemption. And the fact of such a knowledge has a sure ground in the Scriptures.² The references given are sufficient for the point made, though there are many other texts and facts of like import.³

Nor need we have any perplexity respecting either

¹ Gilbert: "The Christian Atonement," pp. 218-220, 352, 353.

² Eph. 3: 10; 1 Pet. 1: 12; Rev. 5: 11-13.

³ Dr. Chalmers: "Astronomical Discourses," Discourse iv.

the possibility or the means of such universal information. Moral beings, ever steadfast in holiness and obedience, cannot be in entire isolation, however remote their dwelling-places. They have a common center of union and intercourse in God, as the one Creator and Father of all. "What, then, can He who made them be at any loss how to instruct them? Does one sun dart his beams above, below, around, as well as upon a single spot of earth; and cannot the central light of God convey revelation to others as well as to us? Is there no angel to bear the news? no prophet among them to receive the inspiration? To them, then, as to principalities and powers in heavenly places, may be made known the manifold wisdom of God in the Church."¹

While, therefore, the lesson of the atonement surely opens its pages to the reading of all intelligences, the fact itself, and the great truths which it reveals, cannot fail profoundly to interest and impress all minds. A little attention will give us the facts for the full verification of this position.

3. *One Moral Constitution of All.* — Divine revelation makes known to us the existence of other orders of moral beings. With this knowledge even reason hears, respecting each order, the one creative fiat of Godhead. "In our image, after our likeness."² And, formed in the one image of God, they have a oneness of moral constitution. As made known in the Scriptures, they clearly have a moral nature like our own, and, therefore, in the likeness of each other.

¹ Richard Watson: "Sermons," vol. i, p. 187.

² Gen. 1: 26.

4. *The same Moral Motivity in All.*—However numerous their orders or vast the scale of their gradations, yet, with a oneness of moral nature, they are one in moral motivity. The same divine truths which impress one may impress another, or that interest and sway us may interest and sway all. The soul of each is open to the practical revelation of God in his justice, holiness, and love; in his marvelous works of creation and providence; in his universal Fatherhood; in all the behests of his will.

5. *The Cross a Power with All.*—The revelation of God and truth in the atonement may give to all their profoundest religious conceptions, and move them with a pathos of love and a power of moral influence above every other. In the marvelous adjustments of the infinite wisdom there is not wanting a masterly correlation of all moral natures to the grandest truth in the universe. All holy intelligences are open to the moral power of the cross.

6. *Higher Orders Interested in Redemption.*—The facts of this interest might be appropriated to a further illustration of truths previously given. The nature of the interest as made known, the facts which it regards, and the measure of it, all signify a likeness of moral cognition and motivity to our own, and, therefore, a capacity for the apprehension and practical realization of the great truths revealed in the atonement.

The sympathy of higher orders with us is made known by the Redeemer himself: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which

need no repentance.” “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”¹ These words are very direct and explicit, and entirely sufficient. Yet there are many other words and facts which convey a like sense. Angels often press into the scenes of human history, and not as curious spectators, but as deeply interested in human welfare. And their profounder sympathy, as evinced in their exceeding joy over our repentance, is given in an association with illustrative facts of human experience—as in the parables of the lost piece of silver, the lost sheep, and the prodigal son—which clothe it in the likeness of our own sympathies.² Only, the sympathies of these higher orders are broader and deeper. Ours largely conform to the laws of our more special relationships, and are much subject to what is merely conventional, while theirs are free from such limitations. With them all intelligences are a common brotherhood. Hence their sympathies go out alike to all. So they come down to us. And, with the fullness of their love and profound apprehension of our miseries in sin, they have the deepest compassion for us. Hence their exceeding joy over our repentance. They view it as our escape from the misery and death of sin, and our entrance upon the highway of life, with its terminus amid their own thrones and glories. This is their exceeding joy.

But their joy has other impulses than such sympathy with us. It specially has an impulse in a profound love

¹ Luke 15 : 7, 10.

² Dr. Chalmers: “Astronomical Discourses,” Discourse v

and loyalty to Christ. They know that our salvation is dear to him. Their whole nature is profoundly enlisted with him in the work of saving us. And when they witness his success and his own satisfaction in our salvation, they have exceeding joy—their joy welling up from the profoundest love and loyalty to him.

In such facts respecting the sympathy of higher orders with us, especially in its relation to our salvation and to Christ as the Saviour, we are assured of their knowledge of the great redemption in his blood, and of their profound interest therein. Chosen messengers from their own mighty hosts welcomed his redeeming advent, and in gladdest strains proclaimed him a Saviour.¹ In the holy of holies skillfully wrought cherubim with intent gaze hovered over the mercy-seat, the place of atonement and symbol of the atonement in the blood of Christ; and thus they symbolized the profound interest of the angels in the study of the mysteries of redemption.² Nor could they fail of such a knowledge of the atonement as would give them the practical force of its great truths.

7. *Universal Lordship of Christ.*—The exaltation of Christ in supreme Headship over the Church, and in universal Lordship over the angels, is a truth clearly given in the Scriptures.³ The passages noted in the reference are most explicit, and full of the loftiest utterances. Christ is Head of the Church universal, whether on earth or in heaven, and supreme Lord over all intelligences.

¹ Luke 2: 9–14. ² Exod. 25: 18, 22; Heb. 9: 5; 1 Pet. 1: 12.

³ Eph. 1: 20–23; 3: 10; Phil. 2: 9–11; 1 Pet. 3: 22.

Such royal investiture of the exalted Christ is in reward of his humiliation and redeeming death. A recurrence to the texts given by reference in this connection will make this clear to any mind. We may cite one in illustration. With its connection its words are these: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Such exaltation has not respect to Christ simply in his divinity. The texts which reveal it give a contrary sense. Nor is the idea of such an exaltation of divinity in itself simply at all admissible.

Much less may we hold this royal investiture simply in respect of the human nature of Christ. This is forbidden by the nature of the powers and prerogatives with which he is clothed. Saints and angels, principalities and powers, all holy intelligences, are made subject to him. They must render him the fullest obedience and the profoundest worship. His divine nature, therefore, must not be considered as separate from him in this marvelous exaltation, else Christianity be justly accounted the vastest system of idolatry ever estab-

lished. It would be such a system, and not only on earth, but also in heaven, and throughout the universe.

It is the incarnate Son, the Christ in two natures, and yet in unity of personality, that is so exalted. It is the redeeming God-man, the veritable *Theanthropos* who receives such royal investiture. As such he is worthy of it all; worthy in his divinity, and worthy because of his redeeming work. It is fitting that he who stooped so low should be exalted so high.

Such enthronement as the Saviour is the peculiar glory of the Son. There is thus claimed for him the obedience and worshipful homage of all intelligences. It is the peculiar glory of the Father that he is the Creator and Ruler of all things. When creation and providence are ascribed to the Son it is in the deepest truth and reality of both, but never excluding the idea of his subordination therein to the Father. And such facts are set forth in the Gospel, not as his peculiar glory, but specially in connection with his redeeming work, that we might be assured of its sufficiency.¹

This distinction of the peculiar glory of each is clearly given in the Scriptures.² In the first passage noted in the reference, the words of the holy worshipers are: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created;" and in the second: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

¹ John 1: 1-4, 14; Col. 1: 14-18. Heb. 1: 3.

² Rev. 4: 10, 11; 5: 11, 12.

It may seem strange that Christ, as the Saviour of man and exalted in our nature, should be enthroned in sovereignty over angels as over saints. It is a noteworthy fact. Nor is it without its reasons. In his divinity he is worthy of such honor and glory. And it is fitting that in his exaltation he should receive a dominion reaching far beyond the immediate subjects of his redemption. Then his redeeming work touches the heart of angels, and of all holy intelligences, as nothing else can. They will ever find their highest reason for a worshipful loyalty to his throne in that he ransomed us from the power of sin by the sacrifice of himself. In the profoundest sympathy with us in the miseries of sin and death, they have the profoundest love and loyalty to him for our salvation.

Yet this is no monopolized glory on the part of the redeeming Lord. His royal investiture, the bowing of every knee to him, the confession of every tongue that he is Lord—all is “to the glory of God the Father.” We have given two celestial scenes as opened in the Revelation: one, in which the Father receives universal homage as the Creator and Ruler of all things; the other, in which the Son receives universal homage as the Lamb slain. There is no dissonance here. Then in a third scene, as we behold the worshipers and listen to their devout strains, we catch the fullness of the divine harmony: “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.”¹

Now, grouping the several facts under the universal

¹ Rev. 5 : 13.

Lordship of Christ, we are again assured that the knowledge of his atonement comes to all intelligences, and in a manner profoundly to interest them. Its marvelous truth and grace, its revelation of God in his justice, and holiness, and love, must occupy their minds and take profoundest hold upon all the practical forces of their moral being.

And we thus find that great ends are answered by the universal Lordship of the exalted Christ. As he is enthroned over all, so is he set before all. This gives to all a knowledge of his redeeming work. And the two facts of his humiliation and exaltation combine in a universal lesson of the highest moral and religious truth. There is such a lesson in the atonement. It is fraught with a manifold divine wisdom. We may here recall in mind the words of St. Paul, previously given by reference, "wherein he speaks of the work of redemption through Christ as containing a revelation, or exhibition, of the manifold—many-sided, or many-colored—wisdom of God—*ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ*.¹ The precise connection of thought in which the expression occurs it is not necessary to point out: it bears the stamp of a phrase coined by the apostle to embody the feeling produced in his mind by deep and protracted reflection on the gracious purpose of God in Jesus Christ. After long, rapt meditation on the sublime theme, Paul feels that the divine idea of redemption has many aspects. The pure light of divine wisdom revealed in the Gospel is resolvable into many colored rays, which together constitute a glorious spectrum

¹ Eph. 3: 10.

presented to the admiring view of principalities and powers in heavenly places, and of all men on earth whose eyes are open to see it.”¹ But it is not simply for their admiration. The atonement has infinite treasures of most salutary truth. Such truth reaches all intelligences, specially through the universal Lordship of Christ, and rules them through the practical force of the ideas and motives which it embodies. This is the divinest moral government.

8. *Grandeur of the Atonement.* — We depart not from the position that the atonement is directly and actually for man only, but none the less hold that of an infinitely broader practical relation to intelligent beings.

Divine moral government is one and universal, as the law of gravitation is one and universal. This one law holds sway over the earth, and the planets, and all the stellar worlds. So moral law, in its deeper principles, is one over man, and angels, and all intelligences. The material and moral systems are widely different: in the one, a law of necessitating force; in the other, a law of obligation, with freedom of the subjects. Here the highest ruling forces are in the moral ideas associated with the law, and in the sanctions which enforce its duties. As previously stated, their governing power is conditioned on certain moral motivities in the subjects. As the moral constitution of subjects is so correlated to the moral law that there may be a profound realization of its obligation together with all the higher motives of duty, so, and only thus, has the moral law a

¹ Dr. Bruce: “The Humiliation of Christ,” p. 363

high ruling power. Even penalty, as a salutary force of law, must take its place on such principles and in association with such facts.

The atonement in Christ takes its place in such a universal moral government. As an atonement for sin it has its application to the smallest segment of the moral system; but in its significance and ruling forces it has a universal application. And in the marvelous economies of his wisdom and love, God has provided for its highest benedictions in all such breadth of relation. Illustrations we already have in the universal information of the atonement; in its ruling force, by virtue of its own facts and the adjustment of all moral natures to its influence; in the universal Lordship of Christ as the special means of such information and influence. Thus as the highest revelation of God in his holiness, and justice, and love; in his invincible hostility to sin; in his immutable purpose to maintain his own honor and authority, and sacredly to guard the rights and interests of his subjects, the atonement takes its place in the universal moral system. With all the potencies of practical truth it addresses itself to all minds.

As the highest revelation of infinite love, the atonement will bind all holy intelligences in the deeper love to the one enthroned Lord of all, and so, with all their distinctions of order and grade, bind them in love to one another. "And the principle which shall harmonize this system is at once seen, if it be assumed that when the Eternal Word was made flesh—when He who was 'before all things and in whom all things consist' hum-

bled himself to the level of mortality, and, 'passing by the nature of angels,' took upon him a nature 'somewhat lower'—there was a purpose involved which goes beyond the immediate results of the propitiatory work of the Redeemer. So that when his vicarious functions shall have reached their completion, the union of the divine and human natures shall continue to bear a relation to the social economy of the great immortal family in the heavens, and shall forever subsist as the principle or the reason of communication and harmony among all ranks."¹ This view, so rational in thought and forceful in expression, is far clearer and more forceful when read in the light of such facts and principles as we have given in this chapter.

When, therefore, we assert a necessity for the atonement and set forth its benefits, we must, for any adequate conception, take an infinitely broader view than the present sphere of humanity, or even the eternal destiny of the race. Because the one law of gravitation is universal, the disorder of one world might, if uncorrected, become a far extended evil; while its correction might be a good extending far beyond itself, and reaching even to all worlds—except to any wandering star lost in the blackness of darkness forever. So the evil of sin in this world might, with the license of impunity, become a far extended evil; while its treatment under the atonement may become a far extended good, reaching even to all intelligences—except the incorrigible or finally lost, fitly compared to a wandering and forever lost star.² And such treatment of

¹ Isaac Taylor: "Saturday Evening," p. 370.

² Jude 13.

sin, with forgiveness on a true faith in Christ, may be, and no doubt is, an infinitely higher moral good to other intelligences than its unconditional doom under the penalty of justice.¹

Thus all minds receive the great lesson of the atonement, with its potency of moral truth and pathos of love. And all intelligences, faithful or fallen, must bow the knee at the name of Christ. In the lesson of his cross all will learn the profoundest truth of the divine holiness and love; of the evil and hopeless doom of unatoned or unrepented sin; of the obligation and blessedness of obedience and love. All holy intelligences, bound in deeper love and loyalty to the divine throne by the moral power of the atonement, will forever stand the firmer in their obedience and bliss. And the cross, once the stigma of most heinous crime and the sign of the deepest abasement of Christ, shall henceforth symbolize to all intelligences the sublimest moral truth in the universe.

¹ Richard Watson: "Sermons," vol. i, pp. 187-189.

CHAPTER XI.

OBJECTIONS TO THE ATONEMENT.

WE must not omit all notice of the stock objections to the atonement. Yet they have little relevancy as against the doctrine which we maintain, and, therefore, require no elaborate refutation.

I.

AN IRRATIONAL SCHEME.

Opponents of fundamental Christian truth are great on the rational, and especially on the irrational. A glance of their marvelous philosophic acumen detects the disconformity of a doctrine to reason. This is conclusive against it. Thus the atonement is summarily dismissed as an irrational scheme.

1. *A Pretentious Assumption.*—Such an objection little becomes the limitations of human reason. In our own resources we but feebly grasp the principles and requirements of divine moral government, and, therefore, cannot pronounce against either a necessity for the atonement, or the wisdom of its measures, or the beneficence of its results. Human reason, all-unequal to its devisement, is all-incompetent to a conclusive judgment against it. And while with us the government of a provincial municipality is still a perplexing problem, we do but arrogantly pronounce against the wisdom of the atonement in the infinitely broader

sphere of divine moral government. The more certainly is this true since the deliverances of the highest reason accord to the economy of redemption in Christ an infinite excellence and wisdom.

2. *Analogies of Providence.*—If the scheme of atonement is in analogy to the general course of providence, the fact wholly voids this objection, except on the broad ground that the general course of providence is irrational. But such an assumption would bar all title to a respectful hearing on the part of any one professing faith in Christianity, or even in God.

The vicarious principle is the most common law of human society in every form of its constitution.¹ And it is no arbitrary appointment, but springs inevitably from the providential relations of human life. In the family, in society, in the commonwealth, one serves another, suffers for another. One takes upon himself labor and suffering on account of the sin of another, averts evil from him, and brings him good. Here is the vicarious principle. Human life is full of it.

Such is the mediation of Christ in vicarious suffering. Nor is the principle really changed in the fact that his sufferings meet a special exigency of moral government in order to the forgiveness and salvation of sinners. Any objection respecting the justice of the case will be met elsewhere, and really is not pertinent here, because this exigency of moral government is met in the mediation of Christ by vicarious suffering, not by substituted punishment. Only the latter element could carry the atonement out of such analogy to very many vicari-

¹ Butler: "Analogy of Religion," Part ii, chap. v.

ous facts of human life, as to deny it the vindication of that analogy. And neither revelation, nor the general course of providence, nor reason itself, pronounces the scheme of vicarious atonement irrational.

II.

A VIOLATION OF JUSTICE.

No objection has been urged either more violently or persistently against the atonement than this. A few words, however, will answer for all the defense required of us.

1. *No Infringement of Rights.*—Injustice comes with the refusal of dues, with the deprivation of lawful possessions or inalienable rights, with wrongful injury or unmerited punishment, not otherwise. Such facts are a violation of justice, because a violation of rights. Without this there can be no injustice. On this ground we have an easy answer to the objection of injustice in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. Others may answer for their own doctrine.

2. *Analogy of Vicarious Suffering.*—Men often endure toil and suffering, and jeopard life itself, in behalf of others. They do this electively, cheerfully, not of coercion. Do they suffer any violation of rights thereby? Is any injustice done them? Does their own reason or the common moral judgment so pronounce? Surely not. Indeed, both approve such vicarious sacrifice, and reprehend its refusal on proper exigency.

3. *Atonement Clear of Injustice.*—That the vicarious sufferings of Christ meet a special requirement of moral government in order to our forgiveness and salvation

introduces no element of injustice. Nor did Christ, in all his relations to the will of the Father respecting the deepest sufferings which he endured, ever evince any sense of injury or wrong. Nor was there any wrong to him: for, while he so suffered in obedience to the will of the Father, it was none the less his own election in the purest freedom. And it is no punishment of one for the sin of another. All injustice, therefore, is excluded.

4. *Vantage-ground against Moral Theory.*—This is a common objection with those who maintain the Moral theory of atonement. We claim a position of the highest advantage against them. They admit the sufferings and death of Christ as consequent upon his redemptive mission, and as for men in this sense. They admit the severity of his sufferings and the shameful manner of his death. But, on their scheme, his extreme suffering is only incidental to his saving work, while on ours it is the necessary ground of forgiveness and salvation. Therefore, our doctrine will vindicate such a divine economy, while theirs will not.

The real problem is in such suffering of the innocent in behalf of the guilty. "State this fact as indeterminate as you please; rigidly adhere to the coldest and most undefining forms of language; allow only that the innocent suffered for the advantage of the guilty; what possible abatement of the charge of injustice do you supply? The difficulty, if any—the mystery, the awful mystery—remains in full proportion behind the flimsy cloud. That mystery is, the innocent, the virtuous, the perfect One, has borne tremendous agony.

This is the point of startling wonder, whatever the result: of wonder to be diminished only by the exigency, the mighty good accruing, not otherwise to be attained."¹ The profound exigency is the vindicatory fact. Intense vicarious suffering, arising in a specially providential economy, and without a sufficient reason in attainable good, is of impossible defense. Such is the case with the Moral view. But the doctrine of a real atonement in Christ, with the necessity of his redemptive sufferings as the means of salvation, and the infinite good attained, gives us the clearest and fullest theodicy.

III.

A RELEASEMENT FROM DUTY.

This objection, if intelligently and honestly made, must have in view some particular doctrine of atonement. Otherwise it has neither pertinence nor force, whatever weight logical validity would give it.

1. *Fatal, if Valid*.—No doctrine of atonement could stand against such an objection if grounded in truth. But duty has no surer ground, and no more imperative behest respecting all that constitutes the highest moral and religious worth, than in the atonement itself. Hence any doctrine really open to such an objection must be in error. Nor will the history of doctrines permit the assertion that no one has been so open. Antinomianism itself has a place in that history. And any commercial theory, or doctrine of atonement by absolute substitution in precept and penalty, is open to this objection, however its advocates disclaim the implication.

¹ Rev. Joseph Gilbert: "The Christian Atonement," p. 93.

A punishment so endured for us, and a righteousness so wrought on our account, cannot again be required of us under any claim of justice or sanction of law. But the doctrine which we maintain is not answerable in such a case.

2. *Nugatory on a True Doctrine.*—On a true doctrine the atonement in Christ is simply the ground of forgiveness, not the merited punishment of sin. Hence we are guilty all the same, though now with the privilege of forgiveness and salvation. And for such a result through redemptive grace there is required a true repentance for sin and a true faith in Christ; and, as the condition of his continued favor, a true obedience to his will. A measure of forgiveness in behalf of rebels would surely be no discharge from the obligation and requirement of future loyalty, and especially when the continuance of the restored franchisements is conditioned on fidelity in future loyalty. Such are the facts respecting the atonement. And in all its truth and lesson it makes duty specially imperative and responsible, and presses its claim with a weight of obligation and a power of motive peculiar to itself. It is, therefore, wholly and forever clear of this objection.

IV.

AN ASPERSION OF DIVINE GOODNESS.

This, also, must have in view some special doctrine of atonement. Otherwise, it is so manifestly groundless that it can hardly be a mere fallacy, and must be a sophistry; not a mere error in its logic, but an intentional error.

1. *Reason of Law and Penalty.*—Whence comes law? And wherefore penalty? Is their origin in the cruelty of rulers? Is revengefulness the moving impulse of legislators and ministers of law? Is vindictiveness the inspiration of punishment? Is implacableness the sole restraint of the pardoning power? No man can think so. The public good requires both law and penalty. Here is their source. This fact does not give us the highest principles of divine moral government, yet has enough analogy for illustration. Rulers in human government, if by personal qualities well fitted for their office, cherish infinitely higher sentiments than the present objection would imply in application to them. With rulers of the highest and best qualities clemency would often release the criminal when the public good constrains his punishment. And they should have the honor of a wise and beneficent administration rather than suffer the reproach of vindictiveness.

2. *No Aspersions of Goodness.*—Now if the punitive ministries of justice imply no vindictiveness, but evince the wisdom and beneficence of government, how does the refusal of pardon so imply? Then how would the requirement of such provision as would render forgiveness consistent with the ends of government show any implacability? And then how does the atonement, as necessary to the consistency of forgiveness with the infinite interest of moral government, impeach the clemency of the divine Ruler, or asperse his goodness? When this is shown, other questions may be asked. Until then they are not necessary.

3. *Divine Love Magnified.*—The atonement has its

original in the divine love. Nor has it any other possible source. The human mind is powerless for the original conception of such a scheme. Nor could it have birth in the mind of angel or archangel, but in God only. And with him its primary impulse must arise in his love. It could not arise in any perfection of knowledge, or power, or justice, or holiness. There must be a profound sympathy with human woe. An infinite compassion must yearn over the miseries of sin. Love only can answer to such requirement. "God is love."¹ Herein is the primary impulse of human redemption, and the ever active force in all its infinite sacrifices. To this one source the Scriptures ever trace it.

And the divine love, so moving to an atonement for sin, must meet the sacrifices which it requires. These are infinitely great. A plan of human redemption must be adjusted to the profoundest interests of the moral universe. The infinite exigency reaches into heaven for the Son of the Father's love. He must be the atoning sacrifice. He must be delivered up to humiliation and death. The divine love answers to the infinite exigency.² And while the cross stands as the symbol of the atonement, and it is written "God so loved the world," that atonement casts no aspersion upon his clemency, but infinitely magnifies his love.

¹ 1 John 4: 16.

² John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6-10; 8: 32; 1 John 4: 10.

CHAPTER XII.

UNIVERSALITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

ARMINIANISM and Calvinism, the two leading evangelical systems, inevitably join issue on the extent of the atonement. The former, by its principles of moral government, its doctrine of sin, and the cardinal facts of its soteriology, is determined to a theory of universality. The latter, by its doctrine of divine decrees, its principles of soteriology, and the nature of the atonement which it maintains, is determined to a theory of limitation. Hence, as previously noted, the question of extent is more than a question of fact; it concerns the very doctrine of atonement. It specially concerns the doctrine of Satisfaction. If in the divine destination the atonement is alike for all, and actually as well as potentially sufficient for all, then that doctrine cannot be true. Otherwise, all must be saved. Its advocates will not dissent from this.

There is a modified Calvinism which holds a general atonement; but the fact does not affect the correctness of our statement respecting Calvinism proper. And this modified view rather shifts than voids the very serious difficulties of limitation, or replaces them with others equally grave.

The new theory originated early in the seventeenth century with Camero, an eminent Protestant and professor of theology in France. Amyraut, Placæus, and

Cappellus were his associates, and active in the development and propagation of his views. Baxter is in their succession. Many Congregationalists and New School Presbyterians have held substantially the same theory.¹

The doctrine, while maintaining a general atonement, holds in connection with it special election and a sovereign application of grace in the salvation of the elect. Christ died for all. The Gospel, with all its overtures of grace may, therefore, be preached to all in the fullest consistency. But all reject its proffered grace. They do this from a moral inability to its acceptance; yet responsibly, because of a natural ability to the acceptance. Then God interposes, and sovereignly applies the grace of atonement in the salvation of the elect.

In addition to the two distinctions of supralapsarian and infralapsarian election, this doctrine really gives us a third, which might be called infraredemptarian. A universal atonement could have no universal gracious purpose when beforehand God had elected a part to the benefit of its grace, and treated the rest with at least an utterly dooming preterition. Indeed, such a previous election and a universal atonement cannot stand together. An election after redemption may be consistent with this modified Calvinistic soteriology. The theory, however, is really valueless for the relief of the very serious difficulties which beset the doctrine of a limited atonement. But we here dismiss it as not directly in the line of the present question.

This further may be said, without any retraction respecting Calvinism, that there is nothing in its deeper

¹ M'Clintock & Strong: "Cyclopædia," vol. i, pp. 209, 210.

principles to limit the atonement, had it pleased God to destinate it for all. Such a divine sovereignty as the system asserts was surely free to embrace all in the covenant of redemptive grace. But as the atonement of Satisfaction, both by its own nature and by all the principles of soteriology scientifically united with it must issue in the actual salvation of all for whom it is made, and as actual salvation is limited in fact, therefore such an atonement must have been limited in its divine destination. So it is held.

The question of extent in the atonement has its issue and interest mainly between Arminianism and Calvinism. Historically, its polemics is specially between them. Nor shall we turn aside in this discussion to treat its comparatively indifferent relation to other schemes. Both of these systems maintain the reality of an atonement in Christ as the only and necessary ground of forgiveness and salvation. And as the question of its nature lies specially between them, so does that of its extent.

I.

DETERMINING LAW OF EXTENT.

1. *Intrinsic Sufficiency for All.*—If the son of a king should mediate in behalf of rebellious subjects, and so much should be required, in whatever form of personal sacrifice, for each individual forgiveness, then the extent of the forgiveness provided would be determined by the amount of sacrifice endured by the mediating son. The atonement in the mediation of Christ is on a different principle. So it is maintained, and has been,

with the exception of the now generally discarded Commercial scheme of an identical or equal penalty by substitute. Now by common consent the atonement is the same in intrinsic worth, and infinitely sufficient for all, whether really for all or for only a part. Hence, if there be a limitation to a part of mankind, it must be the result of a limiting divine destination, and not from any want of an intrinsic sufficiency for all. So far there is now no reason for any polemics between Calvinism and Arminianism.

2. *Divine Destination Determinative.*—The redemption of men in a mass, and merely as such, or of humanity as a nature, and therefore of all individual partakers of the nature, is inherently erroneous and false to the true doctrine of atonement. The atonement is for sinners as such, and, therefore, must be directly for them as individual sinners. It is only as such that they may be either condemned or forgiven. It is only, therefore, in their distinct personalities that they can be either in need of an atonement or the recipients of its grace. This notion of the redemption of human nature as such, and therefore of all its individuations in personality, has never gained any formal position in Arminian theology; yet it has not been entirely absent from individual opinion and utterance. It has, probably, commended itself to some as strongly favoring the universality of the atonement. If founded in truth it would be conclusive of the question. It is not founded in the truth, nor can it be; and for the reason previously given. Nor is such a position at all necessary to the grand truth of a universal atonement.

The atonement is for individual men by virtue of a divine intention. While, therefore, sufficient for all, it is really for all or for a part only, according to that same divine intention. We are so writing in full knowledge of the fact that such is precisely and explicitly the Calvinistic position. We shun it not on that account. It is the truth in the case, and, therefore, we fully accept it. We shall suffer no detriment, but find an advantage, in the maintenance of a universal atonement. But Calvinistic divines, while holding a limited atonement, are most pronounced upon its intrinsic sufficiency for all. And they warmly repel all accusation of a contrary view, and all idea that a limitation of sufficiency can have any logical sequence to their scheme. No Arminian can be more explicit or emphatic in the declaration of this sufficiency. The question of their consistency is another question, but one that does not properly arise here. But they are consistent and right in maintaining that the extent of the atonement is determined by its divine destination. While intrinsically sufficient for all, it is really for only a part, because God so intended it. Such is their ground.

We might verify these positions by numerous quotations from the highest Calvinistic authorities. Their truth, however, is so familiar to careful students of this subject, and so out of all question, as to be in little need of proof. A few quotations may be given rather in the way of example or illustration.

“The obedience and sufferings of Christ, considered in themselves, are, on account of the infinite dignity of his person, of that value as to have been sufficient for

redeeming, not only all and every man in particular, but many myriads besides, had it so pleased God and Christ that he should have undertaken and satisfied for them.”¹

On the question respecting the extent of the atonement: “It does not respect the value and sufficiency of the death of Christ, whether as to its intrinsic worth it might be sufficient for the redemption of all men. It is confessed by all, that since its value is infinite, it would have been sufficient for the redemption of the entire human family had it appeared good to God to extend it to the whole world. . . . The question which we discuss concerns the purpose of the Father in sending the Son, and the intention of the Son in dying.”²

“That the value of our Lord’s satisfaction is, in itself, considered infinite; sufficient, if applied, to save the whole of Adam’s fallen race; and that, had it been God’s intention to save all mankind, our Saviour’s obedience and sufferings would have been amply meritorious, and no addition to the depth of his humiliation, or to the purity of his life, or to the intensity of his agonies, would have been required by divine justice : all this we fully believe.”³

“The two sides of this question do not imply any difference of opinion with regard to the sufficiency of the death of Christ, or with regard to the number and character of those who shall eventually be saved. . . . But they differ as to the destination of the death of

¹ Witsius: “On the Covenants,” vol. i, p. 225.

² Turretin: “Atonement of Christ,” p. 123.

³ Dr. Janeway: “The Atonement.” Presbyterian Tracts, vol. i, p. 16.

Christ; whether in the purpose of the Father and the will of the Son it respected all mankind, or only those persons to whom the benefit of it is at length to be applied.”¹

“All Calvinists agree in maintaining earnestly that Christ’s obedience and sufferings were of infinite intrinsic value in the eye of the law, and that there was no need for him to obey or suffer an iota more nor a moment longer in order to secure, if God so willed, the salvation of every man, woman, and child that ever lived.”²

It is needless to add to these authorities by further quotation. We add a few by reference.³

Whether such a view has scientific consistency is a question which concerns not us, but those who maintain it. Dr. Schaff has real ground for saying, as he artlessly does in the reference just given: “Full logical consistency would require us to measure the value of Christ’s atonement by the extent of its actual benefit or availability, and either to expand or to contract it according to the number of the elect.” If the atonement is by penal substitution, why did Christ suffer a far deeper punishment than strict justice required as a full equivalent for the penal dues of the elect? We know that the excess of merit is ascribed to the infinite

¹ Dr. Hill: “Lectures in Divinity,” pp. 505, 506.

² Dr. A. A. Hodge: “The Atonement,” p. 356.

³ Owen: “Works,” (Goold’s,) vol. x, p. 297; Schaff: “Creeds of Christendom,” vol. i, pp. 520, 521; Symington: “Atonement and Intercession,” p. 185; Smeaton: “Apostles’ Doctrine of Atonement,” p. 538; Hodge: “Systematic Theology,” vol. ii, p. 544; Cunningham: “Historical Theology,” vol. ii, p. 332.

rank of Christ. But, on this doctrine, his penal suffering is a necessary element of atonement: and it is still true that he suffered a deeper punishment than justice required. Was this just? Would God so punish him when a far less measure would be all that justice required? The Rectoral atonement has a place for the utmost vicarious suffering of Christ: but the Satisfaction atonement has no place for any excess of substitutional punishment. There is an excess without any claim or ground in justice, or any end in grace. Punishment, without an adequate ground in justice, is itself an injustice. This is equally true in the case of a substitute in penalty as in that of the actual offender; and equally true of all excess of punishment above the requirement of justice, as of punishment without any ground in justice. And what a waste of atoning worth! All the excess of unapplied grace—enough for all the finally lost and infinitely more—goes for nothing. And those who so cry out against a universal atonement as implying that Christ suffered and died for many in vain, are thoroughly estopped by the inevitable sequences of their own doctrine. Yet Satisfactionists will not surrender this infinite sufficiency. In maintaining a limited atonement they have the profoundest need for it. They could not presume to vindicate the universal overture of atoning grace upon an atonement confessed to be sufficient for only a part.

It is surely clear enough from the quotations and references given, that Calvinism holds the divine destination of the atonement to be determinative of its extent. We fully accept this position. Calvinism is

right, not in the limitation of the atonement, but in the determining law of its extent.

3. *The True Inquiry.*—If the son of a king should interpose in atonement for rebellious subjects, any limitation must be imposed either by the will and purpose of the sovereign atoned, or by the will and purpose of the atoning son. No other has any power in the case. And if we knew the pleasure of each we could determine therefrom the extent of the reconciliation for which provision is made. The atonement is made between the Father and the Son. If limited, either the Father would not accept, or the Son would not make, an atonement for all. There is no other law of limitation. The true inquiry, therefore, respects the will of the Father and the Son, or what was the pleasure of each respecting the extent of the atonement.

In this we are still in full accord with the Calvinistic position. This also is clear from the quotations and references previously given. To these many others might be added. "The pivot on which the controversy—respecting the extent of the atonement—turns is, what was the purpose of the Father in sending his Son to die, and the object which Christ had in view in dying; not what is the value and efficacy of his death."¹ "But the question does truly and only relate to the design of the Father and of the Son in respect to the persons for whose benefit the atonement was made; that is, to whom, in the making of it, they intended it should be applied."²

¹ Turretin: "The Atonement of Christ," p. 124.

² Dr. A. A. Hodge: "The Atonement," p. 359.

II.

PLEASURE OF THE FATHER.

On such a question it is proper to conclude the pleasure of the Father from his own revealed character. There are intimately related facts of decisive testimony; and, also, divine utterances authoritative in the case.

1. *Question of his Sovereignty.*—No plea of the divine sovereignty can bar the inquiry into the divine pleasure respecting the extent of the atonement. In any case, the question is not so much what God might have done as what he was disposed to do and really has done. We raise no question respecting a true divine sovereignty, but discard a purely arbitrary one as utterly inconsistent with the character of God and the great facts of his providence. Even an absolute arbitrary sovereignty might as well conclude for a general as for a limited atonement. But God does not rule in such a sovereignty. All rewards of men according to moral character are to the contrary. So are the revealed decisions of the final judgment. And so is the atonement itself. An absolute arbitrary sovereignty would need no atonement in order to forgiveness, or in determining the happy destinies of men. Such an administration would be far less inconsistent with the divine character than the unconditional reprobation, or equally dooming preterition, of the great part of mankind. And if there be a few facts or utterances which might be construed in favor of an arbitrary sovereignty, they must yield to the great facts, with the atone-

ment itself, which prove the contrary. It is written, and often applied in this connection: "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."¹ But can the forced application of such a text conclude this question? And did it seem good in the sight of the heavenly Father to limit an atonement sufficient for all to the benefit of only a part? Good how, or for what? Good as the expression of a sovereignty which his providence and the atonement itself disclaim? Good as a revelation of justice or grace? Good as a salutary lesson of moral government? It could have no such reason, because an arbitrary sovereignty can have no other reason for its acts than its own arbitrariness.

2. *In one Relation to All.*—God is the Creator and common Father of all men.² There is, therefore, no difference of divine relationship which could be a reason for limitation in the atonement.

This point will carry us further. The atonement originated in the divine compassion, and in its provisions and purposes answers to the yearnings of that compassion. One reason of this compassion was in the divine Fatherhood. God so loved us as wretched and perishing, but especially because we were his wretched and perishing children. Hence the very reason of his redeeming love was common in all. It could not, therefore have been the pleasure of God to destinate the atonement to the favor of only a part, when his love, in which it originated, equally embraced all. And this universal divine love witnesses to a universal atonement.

¹ Matt. 11: 26. ² Num. 16: 22; 27: 16; Acts 17: 28; Heb. 12: 9.

3. *A Common State of Evil.*—As all men appeared in the vision of the divine prescience, there was no difference in their state of evil, certainly none which could be a reason for a partial redemption. Their depravity had a common source and was a common ruin. And however they might be foreseen to differ in actual life, Satisfactionists themselves vigorously deny any and every thing in them as the reason of the alleged limitation. Hence there is not any peculiar evil in a part as the reason of a partial redemption.

This point, also, will carry us further. Again, the atonement originated in the divine compassion. God so loved us as to provide a ransom for our souls. This could be no other than a love of compassion, because the objects of it are sinners and enemies.¹ Why this pitying love? Its subjective form in God has an objective reason in us. That reason is, in the miseries of our moral ruin. And could this pitying love impose upon itself an arbitrary limitation when the very reason of it existed alike in all? And could it be the pleasure of the Father to limit the atonement to a part when his compassion, in which it originated, equally embraced all?

4. *Voice of the Divine Perfections.*—The atonement has a most intimate relation to the divine perfections. Hence they have testimony to give respecting the divine pleasure as to its extent.

Justice.—Divine justice has no unsatisfiable claim. And the redeeming work of Christ, if so intended, is sufficient for its full contentment in behalf of all who

¹ Rom. 5: 8-10; Eph. 2: 4, 5.

accept its grace. So the most rigid partialism will affirm. Forgiveness on the ground of such an atonement tarnishes no glory of justice, nor sacrifices any right or interest of moral government. Hence all reason for limitation in divine justice is excluded.

Holiness.—The divine holiness has no reason for limitation. If the atonement is intrinsically efficacious in the sanctification of all the objects of its favor, then the broader its extent the greater the interest of holiness secured. Indeed, such higher realization of holiness must have been a great reason for the divine preference of a universal redemption.

Wisdom.—As the atonement is a sufficient ground of forgiveness, and, in the case of every sinner saved, a higher revelation of the divine perfections than could be realized in his merited penal doom, so the broader the atonement the greater the good attained. There would also be the greater service to the ends of moral government. Hence, on either theory of atonement, the broader its destination the broader is its helpful grace, and the more salutary its moral lessons. Can it, therefore, be consistent with the divine wisdom to prefer the less good when, through the same atonement, the infinitely greater might be procured?

Goodness.—Beyond these favoring facts, the extent of the atonement is a question of the divine goodness. What is the answer of that goodness? It is really voiced in the sublime words, "God is love!" A God of love must prefer the happiness of all. And as in very truth—as according to all the deeper principles of Calvinism—there was no hinderance in the case, his

good pleasure must have been for a universal atonement.

God has spoken to this point so directly, and in such utterances, as to put the fact of his good pleasure for a universal atonement out of all question.¹ Is it true, as he affirms under most solemn self-adjunction, that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live? Is it true that he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for its redemption? Is it true that he will have all men to be saved? Is it true that he is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish? Can it be, then, that in the absence of all hinderance, and with the presence of an infinitely greater good, he preferred a limited atonement, and sovereignly destined one intrinsically sufficient for all to the favor of only a part? It cannot be. And the Father placed no narrower limit to the grace of redemption than the uttermost circle of humanity

III.

PLEASURE OF THE SON.

1. *Application of Preceding Facts.*—All the facts and principles respecting the pleasure of the Father have full application in the case of the Son. They are of one mind, and the same objects of redeeming love are before them. There is equally with the Son an absence of all reason for a preference of limitation in the atonement, and the presence of the same reasons for his pleasure in its universality.

¹ Ezek. 33: 11; John 3: 16; 1 Tim. 2: 4; 2 Peter 3: 9.

2. *Atoning Work the Same.*—In an atonement by identical or equal penalty, the greater sacrifice required by the greater extent might have been a reason with the Son for limitation. But the atonement is not such. And no lower step of abasement nor deeper anguish was required to embrace all within the sufficiency of its redemptive grace. The vicarious sufferings of Christ as actually endured are all sufficient for a universal atonement.

We are here in full accord with the highest authorities on the doctrine of Satisfaction. This will appear on a recurrence to citations and references previously given.¹ We may add one here. "All that Christ did and suffered would have been necessary had only one human soul been the object of redemption; and nothing different, and nothing more, would have been required had every child of Adam been saved through his blood."² While this view is utterly inconsistent with the principles of Satisfactionists, it shows equally well their position on the question in hand. And they ever allege this sufficiency as the chief ground on which they attempt a defense of the divine sincerity in a universal overture of redemptive grace.

If, therefore, the sufferings of Christ as actually endured are sufficient for the salvation of all men, there could have been no reason or motive from the amount of suffering necessary to give him preference for a limited atonement.

3. *A Question of his Love.*—The question, then,

¹ Chap. xii, I, 3.

² Dr. Hodge. "Systematic Theology," vol. ii, p. 545.

respecting the pleasure of the Son has its answer from his love. That answer must be decisive. Nor is it in any doubt. The Son of God, who, in pitying love to sinners parted with his glory and humbled himself to the deepest suffering and shame, was not wanting in redeeming love to all men. And it was his good pleasure that his atonement should be for all. His cross so affirms.

IV.

SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY.

Under this heading we might discuss at length the Scripture texts usually brought in proof respectively of limitation and universality in the atonement. This, however, is not our purpose; and a brief treatment will answer for our plan.

A full treatment of the present question would also require a thorough discussion of certain assumptions alleged in proof of a limited atonement. We may name the following: A decree of sovereign election to salvation. The elect are given to the Son for the purpose of redemption. His intercession and the gift of the Holy Spirit are limited to them. Christ loved his own people with a special love, and, therefore, redeemed them only. He purchased faith and repentance for them only. The efficacious application of grace, necessary to salvation, is limited to them.¹

Such assumptions can witness for a limited atonement only on the ground of their own truth. There must be a sovereign decree of election, whereby a part

¹Turretin: "The Atonement of Christ," pp. 135-139.

are unconditionally destined to eternal life. Monergism—the invincible saving of the redeemed by the sole agency of the Holy Spirit, and against all possible resistance—must be true. An unconditional final perseverance must be true. The atonement must, from its own intrinsic nature, save all, or require the saving of all for whom it is made. Otherwise, there is no ground for the alleged parallel of extent between it and the other facts of the system.

But it is not our purpose to discuss these questions. This is not necessary to the argument which we are conducting. And we are entirely satisfied with the result of their previous discussion. Since the time of Arminius and the Synod of Dort, with its celebrated “Five Points,” they have held a prominent place in the polemics of theology. If, as we believe, Arminianism has the truth on these questions so vitally concerning the extent of the atonement, it is not limited to a part; and, therefore, not of the nature maintained by Calvinism proper. And so far as these tenets of the system bear on the extent of the atonement, we are content to rest the question on the results of their previous discussion.¹

1. *Proof-texts for Limitation.*—The texts of Scripture

¹This discussion is open to all who have a mind to investigate it. The literature is immense. Among the leading names are, on the one side, Calvin, Turretin, Witsius, Owen, Scott, Toplady, Edwards, Hodge; on the other, Arminius, Episcopius, Goodwin, (“Redemption Redeemed,”) Whithy, (“On the Five Points,”) Wesley, Fletcher, (“Checks to Antinomianism,”) Watson, Bishop Tomline, (“The Refutation of Calvinism,”) Dr. Fisk, (“The Calvinistic Controversy,”) Bishop Foster, (“Objections to Calvinism,”) on the philosophic phases of the issue, Dr. Bledsoe, Dr. Whedon.

more directly applied in proof of a limited atonement are not numerous. Nor will they require a critical or elaborate exegesis to show either their affirmative inconclusiveness, or their utter impotence against the many which so explicitly assert its universality. We shall give the texts for limitation by reference and without full citation. And for the sake of a manifest fairness we will give them from a master in Calvinism, with his own italicising, and connecting and explanatory words.

“ *The mission and death of Christ are restricted to a limited number—to his people, his sheep, his friends, his Church, his body ;* and nowhere extended to all men severally and collectively. Thus Christ ‘is called Jesus, because he shall save *his people* from their sins.’¹ He is called the Saviour of *his body* ;² ‘the good shepherd who lays down his life *for the sheep*,’³ and ‘for his friends.’⁴ He is said ‘to die—that he might gather in one *the children of God* that were scattered abroad.’⁵ It is said that Christ ‘hath purchased *the Church* with his own blood.’⁶ If Christ died for every one of Adam’s posterity, why should the Scriptures so often restrict the object of his death to a few ? ”⁷

This should be noted first, that in all the texts given there is not one word which limits the atonement to the subjects named. And with infinitely more reason and force may we ask, If the atonement is only for a few, why do the Scriptures so often assert that it is for

¹ Matt. 1: 21. ² Eph. 5: 23. ³ John 10: 15.

⁴ John 15: 13. ⁵ John 11: 52. ⁶ Acts 20: 28; Eph. 5: 25, 26.

⁷ Turretin: “The Atonement of Christ,” pp. 125, 126.

all? If, as assumed, it is in its own nature necessarily saving, and the actual saving is included in it, then, of course, there is a limitation. But it is not such. Sufficient proof to the contrary has already been given. Nothing respecting the atonement is more certain than the real conditionality of its saving grace. Hence, it is a mere assumption that the atonement is necessarily saving, and, therefore, that the actual saving is the extent of it. And the elimination of this assumption invalidates the sum of the author's argument. Christ did die for the subjects named in these texts; but as they are without a restricting word, they are without proof of a limited atonement.

Stress is laid upon the terms, his people, his sheep, his friends, his Church, his body, as though they designated a distinct and limited class for which Christ died. They are a distinct and limited class, but as actually saved, not simply as redeemed, and especially not before their redemption. There is no such a class except as the fruit of atonement. Hence, there could be no such a restricted class for which Christ died. The atonement, as the only ground of their peculiar relation to Christ, must precede that relation, and be made for them as lost sinners, ungodly, and enemies.¹ They can enter into such a peculiar relation to Christ only through the grace of an atonement previously made for them. That same atonement, previously made for them as sinners, was so made for all men.

If these texts prove a limited atonement, they must be inconsistent with its universality; or, if consistent

¹ Rom. 5: 6-10; Eph. 2: 11-22.

with this, they do not prove a limited one. There is not the least difficulty in this consistency. It is true, indeed, that Christ died for all the actual sharers in the saving grace of atonement. And there are special reasons for emphasizing the fact. Thus Christ impresses upon their mind the greatness of his love to them, and the greatness of the benefits received through the grace of his redemption, and so enforces his own claim upon their love. But no law of interpretation either requires or implies the assumed restriction in such a use of terms. And the scheme of universality can use them just as freely and consistently as the most rigid partialism.

2. *Proof-texts for Universality.*—There is one class with the universal terms *all* and *every*. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”¹ Yes, to be testified as a truth, and not to be witnessed against. And the text gives its own testimony. We know not a formula for the better expression of a universal atonement. “For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”² If God is not in some similarity of sense the Saviour of all men, as he is specially the Saviour of believers, there is here a comparison without any basis in analogy. If many are foreordained to eternal destruction, or merely under the preterition of a limited atonement equally dooming them to perdition, God is not in any sense the Saviour of all men. But with a universal atonement, whereby

¹ 1 Tim. 2: 5, 6.

² 1 Tim. 4: 10.

the salvation of all is possible, as that of believers is actual, there is a clear sense in which he is the Saviour of all men, and a sense consistent with the implied analogy of the text.

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”¹ Every man is every man. The identity of the two terms of a proposition does not exclude their equivalence. Rather, we have the simple truth that a fact is what it is. And no skill in exegesis can reduce this text to the measure of a limited atonement.

There is another class which affirms the redemption of the world, and in the truest sense of a universal atonement.²

The weakness of all attempts to reduce these texts to the sense of a limited atonement really concedes their irreducible universality. The attempt requires an identification of *the world* with *the elect*. They must have one sense, in that both must mean the same persons. These texts would thus be classed in sense with the proof-texts of limitation, previously considered. World would be one in meaning with the people, sheep, friends, Church, body of Christ. Will it bear such a sense? The exegete has not yet arisen who can answer affirmatively, and make good his answer.

3. *In Extent of the Evil of Sin*.—More than once is the co-extension of sin and atonement set forth.

¹ Heb. 2: 9.

² John 1: 29; 3: 16, 17; 12: 47; 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19; 1 John 2: 1, 2; 4: 14.

“Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”¹ The “all men” in relation to Adam are all in the fullest sense. No real Calvinist will question it. But the “all men” in relation to the redemption in Christ, must be all in the same sense of universality. Indeed, the “all men” in the two relations to Adam and Christ are the very same; and only a forced interpretation could give less extension to the term in the latter case than in the former. The text clearly gives us a universal atonement.

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”² In the full sense of Scripture, Christ died for men as in a state of sin and death, and only for such. But he died for all; therefore all were dead. Thus, in a somewhat syllogistic statement the text gives the universality of the atoning death of Christ as the major premise. It is thus placed as a truth above question.

For “all dead,” some give the rendering “all died”—died in and with Christ.³ Thereon an attempt is made to limit the atonement to the elect.⁴ We will not contend about the new rendering, but must dispute the limiting sense. Candlish here finds the Headship of

¹ Rom. 5: 18.

² 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15.

³ Dr. Candlish: “The Atonement,” p. 62; Alford, *in loco*.

⁴ So Candlish, not Alford.

Christ and the doctrine of imputation of sin to him, and of all that he does and suffers to those whom he represents, in a sense "that whatever befalls the Head must be held to pass, and must actually pass, efficaciously, to all whom he represents." This is the necessary salvation of all for whom Christ died. Hence, he must have died for only a part, or the apostle's argument is implicated in Universalism. "Not only is the argument thus hopelessly perplexed, but, as in the former case, it is found to tell in favor of the notion of universal salvation rather than any thing else; making actual salvation, through the death and life of Christ, co-extensive with death through the sin of Adam." We would not deplore such a realization. Nor would Dr. Candlish. His trouble is with the logic of the case. Actual salvation is limited in fact; therefore, an atonement necessarily saving must be limited. He is logically right. But his trouble comes from his erroneous doctrine of Satisfaction. With an atonement in vicarious suffering sufficient for all, but really conditional in the saving result, its universality is in full logical accord with a limited actual salvation. There is, therefore, no exigency of interpretation from a necessary harmony of fact and doctrine, requiring either the exclusion of the manifest comparison of sin and atonement in co-extension, or the reduction of a universal term to the meaning of a part. And the text above cited, despite all the efforts of a limiting scheme, is clear proof of a universal atonement.

4. *The Great Commission.*—"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every

creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”¹ This great commission laid its solemn charge upon the apostles with all the obligation and authority which the Master, now risen and with all power in his hand, could impose. So it comes down the ages upon all Churches and ministers. And so all true Churches and ministers receive it. We thus have certain indisputable facts intimately related to the extent of the atonement, and decisive of its universality.

i. The Gospel for All.—The very terms of the great commission are decisive of this, that the Gospel is for all. And its universal preaching should be, and in the very nature of it must be, the free offer of saving grace in Christ to all. The most rigid Limitationists fully admit this.² Indeed, they have no alternative. Nor need we insist upon what no one questions.

ii. Salvation the Privilege of All.—The Gospel is the overture of salvation. All to whom it is preached may accept it and be saved. To this end is it preached. And the same privilege would ever accompany the Gospel, were it fully preached in all the world. Nor need we here contend for what is fully conceded.³

iii. Saving Faith the Duty of All.—It is the duty of all to whom the Gospel comes to accept it in faith, and a faith unto salvation. The same would be true, were it in the fullest sense preached to all. This obligation is in the very terms of the great commission. Hence,

¹ Mark 16 : 15, 16.

² Dr. Symington : “Atonement and Intercession,” pp. 209, 210.

³ Dr. Hodge : “Systematic Theology,” vol. ii, p. 558.

eternal destinies are determined according as the Gospel is received or rejected. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Only on an obligation to a true, saving faith in Christ could our action in the case have such consequence. Other texts equally express or imply the same duty of a saving faith.¹ We shall have everlasting life or perish, according as we believe or believe not ; are in condemnation or free from it, according to the same action ; are heirs of life eternal or under the abiding wrath of God, as we believe on the Son or do not believe.

Limitationists concede and maintain this duty of faith.² Hence, we need not further support what is not disputed. Indeed, special account is made of this obligation for the vindication of divine justice in the final doom of unbelievers.

The duty of a saving faith in Christ implies an actual grace of salvation in him. The required faith must terminate in his redeeming death. An attainable grace of salvation absolutely conditions the obligation of such a faith. But, on a limited atonement, the Gospel comes to many for whom there is really no such grace. Nor will the assertion of an intrinsic sufficiency for all void this consequence. Then can this faith be the duty of any one for whom there is no saving grace ? How can it be ? It has no objective truth, and would be a trust in what does not exist. Nor could the sal-

¹ John 3 : 14-16, 18, 36.

² "Princeton Essays : " First Series, p. 287 ; Prof. Crawford : "The Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement," p. 202 ; Dr. Candlish : "The Atonement," pp. 172, 260.

vation possibly accrue upon the faith. And has Christ enjoined the offer of an impossible blessing? Has he commanded faith in what is not real? Has he made the unbelief of what is not true a sin of exceeding demerit and damnableness? No, he has not done any of these things. We can most positively so deny; but only on the ground of a real atonement for all.

On a limited atonement, the duty of this faith must be most difficult—too difficult, indeed, to be so responsible. The faith implies, not only an intrinsically sufficient, but an actually sufficient, atonement for any one exercising it. Faith in this fact of an actual atonement must precede, as its necessary condition, the faith of a saving trust in Christ. This is denied.¹ Both authors given in the reference properly distinguish the mental acts of one in believing that Christ died for him, and in believing in him for his salvation; but, strange enough, both deny a necessary precedence to the former act of faith, and, indeed, give precedence to the latter. We know not the mental philosophy by which they place these facts in this order. It must originate in the exigency of their soteriology rather than in the careful study and scientific use of the facts of psychology. But no man ever did or can believe in Christ unto salvation without first believing that he died for him. This is the necessary order of the mental facts. And it is utterly nugatory to plead that no one is commanded first to believe that Christ died for him. This is not claimed. And the necessity arises, not from the

¹ Turretin: "Atonement of Christ," p. 178; Prof. Smeaton: "The Doctrine of the Atonement," p. 322.

immediate command of such a preceding faith, but from inevitable laws of the mind, under the obligation of a divinely-enjoined saving faith in Christ. Such is the necessary order of kindred facts as given by St. Paul: "For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."¹ Here faith in God, as existing and good, must precede all successful coming to him in an earnest seeking and a true faith of trust for his blessing. There is the same necessary order of facts respecting our faith in Christ: first, in believing that he died for us; then, in a sure trust of faith in him for his salvation.

It is here that, on a limited atonement, the exceeding difficulty of the divinely-required faith arises. If Christ died for only a part, and, as many hold, for only the far smaller part of adults, no man has, nor can have, previous to his conversion, satisfactory evidence that there is an atonement for him. And, according to the doctrine of chance as applicable in the case, the presumption is strongly against it. How, then, can he savingly trust in Christ? It is nothing to the point to answer, that he does not know that he is left without redemption; for what he needs to be assured of, as the necessary condition of a saving faith in Christ, is, that he did provide for him.

iv. The Atonement for All.—We group the facts given us under the great commission. The Gospel is for all, and in the free overture of saving grace in Christ. Salvation is the privilege of all to whom the gracious overture is made. A saving faith in the re-

¹ Heb. 11: 6.

demption of Christ is the duty of all who have the Gospel. These are not mere inferences, but facts clearly given in the Scriptures, and fully conceded by the advocates of a limited atonement. By all the force of their logic they witness to the fact of a real atonement for all. They have no other ground. The overture of saving grace has no other; nor the privilege of salvation; nor the duty of a saving faith in Christ; nor the guilt and damnable-ness of unbelief. Therefore, these facts imperatively require a universal atonement, and, so requiring, affirm its truth.

V.

FALLACIES OF LIMITATION.

The law of scientific accordance in vitally related truths and facts makes very serious trouble for the scheme of limited atonement. Certain very discordant but admitted facts require reconciliation with the limitation, or rather, with the divine sincerity, as concerned in them. We shall show that the attempted reconciliation proceeds with fallacies, and, therefore, ends in fallacy.

1. *Facts Admitted.*—These facts were given with the great commission in the previous section, and need only to be recalled. The Gospel is for all. Salvation is the privilege of all under the Gospel. A saving faith in Christ is the duty of all who hear the Gospel. Such are the facts. They have the authority of Scripture. Limitationists fully admit them, as manifest in references previously given. Such references might be increased to a great number. No modern Calvinistic

author of any influence will question them. The common attempt to reconcile them with the divine sincerity is in their full admission.

2. *Inconsistent with the Divine Sincerity.*—There is here no issue either on the admitted facts or on the divine sincerity: the question respects the consistency of the facts with that sincerity, on the ground of a limited atonement. We assert their inconsistency, and accuse their attempted reconciliation of egregious fallacy. On a limited atonement, the Gospel cannot be sincerely preached to all. Nor can salvation be the privilege of all. Nor can a saving faith in Christ be the duty of all, nor of any for whom his death was not divinely destined as an atonement. Such a divine overture of grace and requirement of faith would be to the unredeemed a mockery and a cruelty. These facts go into the present issue. There are no other facts or vindictory pleas which can void the force of their logic. They do not implicate the divine sincerity, but conclude the universality of the atonement as the only ground of their consistency with that sincerity.

3. *Sufficiency of Atonement in Vindication.*—The ground on which Limitationists specially attempt a vindication of the divine sincerity in a universal overture of saving grace, with the other admitted facts, is an alleged sufficiency of the atonement for all.¹ The fact is so familiar that there is but slight reason for any reference. We have previously shown how fully the advocates of a limited atonement maintain its in-

¹ "Princeton Essays: " First Series, p. 291; Dr. Symington: "Atonement and Intercession," pp. 186, 213.

trinsic sufficiency, in just what Christ did and suffered, for the salvation of all men.¹ Thus they have their position of defense in the present issue. Whether, on their doctrine of atonement, there is a real and available sufficiency, such as will answer for the required vindication, we shall directly consider. For the present it may suffice to note the ground on which the vindication is attempted.

4. *True Sense of Sufficiency.*—We must distinguish between a mere intrinsic and an actual sufficiency. There is reason for the distinction. Satisfactionists fully recognize it, especially in application to the redemptive work of Christ. An intrinsic sufficiency is from what a thing is in its own capability. An actual sufficiency is from its appropriation. A life-boat may have ample capacity for the rescue of twenty shipwrecked mariners; but if appropriated, and limited by the appropriation, to the rescue of only ten, the actual and available sufficiency is only so much. One man has money enough for the liberation of twenty prisoners for debt; but whether it shall be available, and so actually sufficient, depends upon his use or appropriation of it. Even if he should appropriate the whole sum, but at the same time destinate it to the benefit of a fixed number—ten of the twenty—then, while intrinsically sufficient for the liberation of all, it would be actually sufficient and available for only the designated ten. The atonement of Satisfaction must yield to such a consequence. The redemptive mediation of Christ, in just what he did and suffered,

¹ Chap. xii, I, 1, 2.

has intrinsic sufficiency for the salvation of all men, but there is a limiting divine destination. Such are the facts as given by Satisfactionists themselves. The sufficiency for all is only potential, not actual from a universal destination. But for the divine vindication in a universal overture of saving grace in Christ, and in holding all to so responsible a duty of faith in him, a mere intrinsic sufficiency will not answer. Only an actual and available sufficiency will so answer.

5. *Sufficiency only with Destination.*—The sufferings of Christ have no atoning value except as they were vicariously endured for sinners with the purpose of an atonement. His incarnation and death are conceivable and possible entirely apart from the purposes of redemption. In that case they would have no atoning element. All atonement is absolutely conditioned by his so suffering for sinners.

The extent of the atonement is thus determined by its divine destination. This agrees with the above principle. And, as we have seen, it is a primary principle in the doctrine of Satisfaction. Hence, as atonement is necessarily conditioned on the divine appointment and acceptance of the sufferings of Christ as a substitute in behalf of sinners, so the divine destination absolutely fixes the limit of its extent. There is no atonement beyond. As the sufferings of Christ are an atonement for sin only with their divine destination to that end, so they have no atoning value for any one beyond those for whom they were redemptively destined. And the plea of a sufficient atonement for all, while its limited destination is firmly maintained, is

the sheerest fallacy. It is as utterly insufficient for all for whom it was not divinely destined as though no atonement had been made for any. Hence the alleged ground on which it is attempted to vindicate the divine sincerity in the universal overture of saving grace, and the imperative requirement of saving faith in Christ, is no ground at all.

6. *Limited in Satisfaction Scheme.*—If we test the assumption of a universal sufficiency in the atonement by the principles of the Satisfaction theory, we shall further see how utterly groundless the pretension is. This is an entirely fair method. For unless there be a sufficiency according to these principles, it is the sheerest assumption, and the vindictory use of it utterly groundless. And this we maintain, that the Satisfaction atonement is, from its own principles, of limited sufficiency.

In this theory atonement is by substitutional punishment in satisfaction of justice. Sin must be punished according to its desert. Any omission would be an injustice in God. So the theory maintains, as we have previously shown. There is no salvation for any sinner except through a substitute in penalty. There is no atonement for any one except in penal substitution. But by divine covenant and destination Christ suffered the punishment of sin for only an elect part, not for all. So the theory asserts. Such an atonement is as utterly insufficient for any and all for whose sins penal satisfaction is not rendered to justice, as though no atonement were made, or there were no Christ to make one.

From its own principles the atonement of Satisfac-

tion is necessarily efficient just as broadly as it is sufficient. The necessary elements of its sufficiency must give it efficiency in the actual salvation of all for whom it is made. If Christ, as accepted substitute, took the place of an elect part under both precept and penalty, and rendered full satisfaction in respect of both, of course they must all be saved. Their repentance and faith are the purchase of redemptive grace, and must take their place as necessary facts in a process of salvation monergistically wrought.

While such is the logic of the principles of Satisfaction, its advocates fully support the same view. The fact is given in previous citations and references.¹ Many such might be added, though a few will suffice. "His atonement may be truly called 'a finished work,' securing not only a *possible* salvation, but an *actual* salvation."² "If the fruits of the death of Christ be to be communicated unto us upon a condition, and that condition to be among those fruits, and be itself to be absolutely communicated upon no condition, then all the fruits of the death of Christ are as absolutely procured for them for whom he died as if no condition had been prescribed; for these things come all to one. . . . Faith, which is this condition, is itself procured by the death of Christ for them for whom he died, to be freely bestowed on them, without the prescription of any such condition as on whose fulfilling the collation of it should depend."³ "But God, in his infinite mercy,

¹ Chap. vii, VI, 2.

² Prof. Crawford: "Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement," p. 200.

³ Owen: "Works," (Goold's,) vol. x, p. 450.

having determined to save a multitude which no man could number, gave them to his Son as his inheritance, provided he would assume their nature and fulfill all righteousness in their stead. In the accomplishment of this plan Christ did come into the world, and did obey and suffer in the place of those thus given to him, and for their salvation. This was the definite object of his mission, and, therefore, his death had a reference to them which it could not possibly have to those whom God determined to leave to the just recompense of their sins.”¹ Respecting the atonement for the elect: “Is it any thing short of a real and personal substitution of Christ in their room and stead, as their representative and surety, fulfilling all their legal obligations, and undertaking and meeting all their legal liabilities? Is it any thing short of such a substitution as must insure that, in consequence of it, they are now, by a legal right—in terms of the law which He as their covenant head has magnified and made honorable in their behalf—free from the imputation of legal blame; that as one with him in his righteousness they are judicially absolved and acquitted, justified from all their transgressions, and invested with a valid legal title to eternal life and salvation?”²

Such is the atonement of Satisfaction. From its own nature it must save all for whom it is made. It has

¹ Dr. Hodge: “Systematic Theology,” vol. ii, p. 547.

² Dr. Candlish: “The Atonement,” pp. 247, 248. For like views see also Prof. Smeaton: “The Apostles’ Doctrine of the Atonement,” pp. 537–540; Dr. Hill: “Lectures in Divinity,” pp. 510, 511; Dr. Janeway: “The Atonement;” “Presbyterian Tracts:” vol. i, pp. 16, 17; Witsius: “The Covenants,” vol. i, p. 206.

ever waged war upon Arminianism for the denial of this causal efficiency as being a denial of the true nature of atonement. It is such that, were it for all, then all must be saved. Hence it is denied that it is for all. A limited actual salvation is ever given as the proof of a limited atonement. It is the only possible atonement. The facts of substitution in Christ necessary to an atonement must be efficient in the salvation of all whom he substitutes.

Is such an atonement sufficient for all? It is made, as maintained, on a covenant between the Father and the Son. By their consenting pleasure it is for a given number of elect souls, and no more. We accept the divine destination as the determining law of its extent. We give full credit to its advocates for asserting its intrinsic sufficiency for all. But an intrinsic or potential sufficiency is one thing, while an actual and available sufficiency is another. Recurring to the citations of Limitationists in the assertion of this sufficiency for all, we often find a qualified expression after this manner: The mediation of Christ, in just what he did and suffered, is sufficient for the salvation of all men, had it pleased the Father and the Son to destinate it for all. But this destination is denied. It is the determining fact of a limited atonement. Hence, on this doctrine, there are many whose place Christ did not take either in precept or penalty. The fact concludes the question of sufficiency against the Limitationists. They must not ignore their own absolutely limiting doctrine, nor must they, in the exigency of defense, be allowed to call a contingent a sufficiency—a sufficiency that might

have been, but is not—a real sufficiency. They must abide by their own principles.

How can there be a sufficient atonement for the non-elect, when according to the principles and averments of this theory there is for them no atonement? Will Limitationists answer? Did Christ die for them? Did he fulfill for them the righteousness which the divine law imperatively requires, and without which there is no salvation? Did he suffer the merited punishment of their sins, also held to be absolutely necessary to their discharge? A limited atonement has only a negative answer. Where, then, is the sufficiency for them? The doctrine must deny its most fundamental principles even to pretend to a sufficiency. The atonement is now, but the work of Christ in making it is in preterit time. Its extent was then absolutely determined. It is for those for whom it was made, and never can be for others. The principles of the doctrine so determine it. An immutable divine decree so bounds it.¹ And only with egregious fallacy can there be even a pretense of sufficiency in the atonement for the non-elect.

Then, on the doctrine of a limited atonement, it is impossible to reconcile the free and universal overture of saving grace in Christ, and the imperative duty of all who hear the Gospel savingly to believe in him, with the divine sincerity. There is for many no sufficient atonement or saving grace. The offered grace is not in the offer. The utmost faith is utterly groundless and delusive. Could one non-elect soul, held to

¹ "The Westminster Confession," ch. iii, III-VII.

the duty of a saving trust in Christ under the penalty of endless perdition, have a faith equal in strength to the combined faith of millions saved, it would be fruitless of forgiveness and salvation to him, as a soul without the substitution of Christ cannot be forgiven and saved. So the doctrine of Satisfaction affirms.

What is the conclusion? The real and unquestioned facts are still before us. On the one hand are the universal overture of saving grace and the responsible duty of saving faith; on the other, the divine sincerity therein. There is no issue between them. There is no question of any such issue. The question is, whether the former are consistent with the latter on the ground of a limited atonement? Certainly they are not. Nor can the divine sincerity be thereon vindicated. We give this discussion of the question in proof. The attempted reconciliation proceeds with fallacies and ends in fallacy. The inevitable conclusion is the universality of the atonement.

7. *Only a Seeming Inconsistency.*—With seeming doubt as to the satisfactoriness of the preceding defense, it is assumed that, after all, the admitted facts may not be inconsistent with the divine sincerity; that our inability to reconcile them is not conclusive of an absolute contrariety; that to higher intelligences, and especially to God, they may appear in full harmony. "That *we* are incapable of reconciling them does not prove them to be irreconcilable. God may be capable of reconciling them; creatures of a higher intellectual and moral rank may see their reconcilableness; or we ourselves, when elevated to a brighter sphere of being,

may yet be fully equal to the difficult problem.”¹ But so conjectural a solution will not answer for so real a difficulty. And there are contrarieties absolutely irreconcilable. Such is the case here. Our highest reason must so pronounce. We cannot rationally go behind it, not even hypothetically. We may accept in faith what is above our reason, but we cannot solve, nor even relieve, a difficulty by an assumption contradictory to our reason. This is the insuperable difficulty here. God cannot sincerely offer saving grace to any soul when the grace is not in the offer. Nor can he righteously impose the duty of a saving faith in Christ upon any one for whom there is no salvation in him.

8. *Mixed State of Elect and Non-elect*.—Another vindication is attempted on the assumption of a necessity arising out of the mixed state of elect and non-elect. The only alternative to an indiscriminate offer of grace and requirement of faith would be an open discrimination of the two classes. “The warrant of faith is the testimony of God in the Gospel. And, it may be asked, could not this testimony have been made only to those to whom it was his design to give grace to receive it? We answer: Not without doing away with that mixed state of human existence which God has appointed for important purposes; not without making a premature disclosure of who are the objects of his special favor and who are not, to the entire subversion of that moral economy under which it is the good pleasure of his will that men should subsist in this

¹ Dr. Symington: “Atonement and Intercession,” p. 210.

world ; not without even subverting the very design of salvation by faith.”¹

The reasons alleged for secrecy in the elective and reprobative purposes of God are without force ; certainly without sufficient force for his vindication in a graceless offer of saving grace in Christ. The mixed state of elect and reprobate would continue as it is. The moral economy under which we live would remain. It is God’s own, and of his appointment. And has he so ordered it as to require of him a free overture of saving grace to many for whom there is none ? Nor would the plan of salvation by faith be subverted. Many, without any question of an atonement for them, refuse all saving faith in Christ ; while many, equally without doubt of an atonement for them, do savingly believe in him. With this discrimination there would still be a proper sphere of saving faith for the elect ; and, on the doctrine of Satisfaction, the faith would be under the same determining law as now.

This disclosure would accord with the facts in the case, and be far better than a false show of grace. It must be made sometime, and is just the same if made now. Nor would the destiny of any soul be affected thereby. Destiny is determined by the decree of God, not by the disclosure of its elective discriminations. Believers and unbelievers would be the very same—neither more nor less, nor other in either class, as the immutable decree of election and preterition is immutable. There is no urgent reason for this indiscriminate overture of partial grace ; while no urgency

¹ Dr. Symington : “Atonement and Intercession,” p. 212.

could justify it. Let the atonement be preached, with the announcement of its partialism, and that the non-elect have no interest in it and no duty respecting it, and the result, as determined by an absolute sovereignty working monergistically, will be the very same. And a limited atonement still contradicts facts divinely given. It must, therefore, be an error.

9. *Secret and Preceptive Divine Will*.—As a last resort, the reconciliation of this overture of grace and requirement of faith with the divine sincerity, is attempted on a distinction between the secret or decreitive and the preceptive will of God. “The purposes of God are not the rule of our duty, and whatever God may design to do, we are to act in accordance with his preceptive will.”¹ “The Gospel call may be regarded as expressive of man’s duty rather than of the divine intention.”² Is this reasoning? The characters of Dr. Hodge and Dr. Symington will not allow us to question its sincerity. But can the precepts and purposes of God run counter to each other? Can he openly offer a grace, and with the forms of gracious invitation and promise, which he secretly intends not to give, and by an eternal purpose withholds? Can he openly command the duty of a saving faith upon any one for whom there is no saving grace, and whom his eternal decree absolutely dooms to the perdition of sin? How could these things be without duplicity? And it is a marvelous supposition that the Gospel, as the invitation and command of God, may represent our

¹ “Princeton Essays:” First Series, p. 285.

² Dr. Symington; “Atonement and Intercession,” p. 211.

privilege and duty, conveying the one and imposing the other, but not his secret will and decree respecting us. Yet it is only on such a supposition that this attempted vindication can have any pertinence whatever. Indeed, the attempt proceeds upon the assumption of this contrariety. A doctrine with such exigency of defense cannot be true.

The atonement, as a provision of infinite love for a common race in a common ruin of sin, with its unrestricted overture of grace and requirement of saving faith in Christ, is, and must be, an atonement for all.

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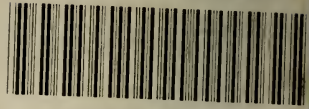
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